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Rasmussen, Anna Mathilde

A Brief History

of the

P. A. Rasmussen Family

Sitting in my chair with pen in hand, jotting down memories of the past, as they have been called to my remembrance, has been an interesting and pleasant task. It has been a blessing to me personally. As general historian of the Women's Missionary Federation of our church, it often amazed me that so many knew very little about their family background.

This prompted my writingⁱ these memories, for the younger generation of our family, to familiarize them with the courage and faith through hardships under pioneer conditions of their ancestors, thanking God for the heritage that is theirs.

If this is achieved, the work has been worth while.

O God, from age to age,
Preserve our heritage
Throughout all generations.

--Mathilde Rasmussen
Minneapolis, Minnesota
1945

Allen County Public Library
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FATHER'S FAMILY

His Parents:

Rasmus Rasmussen

Oline Jacobsen Rasmussen

Their Children:

1. Elisabeth
2. Jacob
3. Grethe
4. Jørgen Frederik Møldrup
5. Katharine
6. Rasmus Olaus
7. Hercules Weyer
8. Henrik Grøtscher
9. Gerhard
10. Peter Andreas

Father

Father was born in the coastal town of Stavanger, in the western part of Norway, on January 9, 1829. His father had a tailor establishment. He was an honest, rather stern man, highly respected by his fellow citizens. I wish that I knew more about him. He died in 1855, only five years after father's leaving for America.

Grandmother lived with Uncle Jacob and Aunt Frødrikke in Bergen after grandfather's death. They had no children. Here she had a fine home and loving care. They wrote so lovingly about their dear mother. To the very last she would always go to church, even though at some distance. It was not Sunday to her without worshipping together with others in the house of God. Numerous letters from relatives breathe deep spirituality and great concern for things eternal. In a letter to father from his brother Jacob -- written in 1856 -- he tells of grandfather's estate having been settled and sends father his share. Evidently this money was used for the buying of the farm home--now the Holland home--bought that same year, where the family lived for ten years before there was a parsonage.

Grandmother reached the age of 83 years. She was a sweet, lovable character. She passed away suddenly while sitting in her rocking chair crocheting what was called a breakfast shawl. Father went to Norway in 1873, and I remember being told that he had looked forward to seeing his mother again, but that she died shortly before he made the trip. This was a sore disappointment to him.

We have no picture of his father. Pictures were scarce in those days. There was order and discipline in the home. They were taught obedience and respect for their parents, a thing often lacking in our day. Father told of a beautiful custom -- that may give us a glimpse into their home atmosphere. On Sunday mornings when the children entered the room and greeted their parents, the father gave each a small coin, and the mother pinned a flower on the coat lapel. The coin was a "to shilling". Grandmother was a lover of flowers, and, as is much the custom in Norway, the windows had many blooming plants.

Father attended the city schools up to the confirmation age at 14 or 15 years, and he was an "A" student. When he was 15 years old, he was sent to Bergen for a six year training in business -- as clerk or salesman -- in the "Gade" Mercantile establishment. In this city his oldest brother, Jacob, had a large, thriving tailor establishment, employing as many as thirty tailors. Judging by suits my father had made there when visiting Norway, both material and workmanship was first class--par excellence. Uncle Jacob had a fine home in the city, also a

mountain summer home. They had no children, but a niece, Grethe Sten, made her home with them. My brother Gerhard visited them during a summer vacation while studying theology at the university in Oslo in 1881 and 1882. When in 1925 I visited Bergen, they had passed on. I asked to see their home, but was told that in 1915 Bergen had a bad fire, destroying a great part of the residential district, in which Uncle Jacob's home was destroyed.

Uncle Jørgen also lived in Bergen. His sons were artistically inclined. Anton, whose picture you see, became a landscape painter of note. He studied in Germany, where later he married and made his home. Some of his paintings were shown at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, but in the German exhibit. Uncle Olaus also made his home in Germany in the town of Dusseldorf. He was never married.

Uncle Weyer was the only one of his brothers that came to America. He settled in Faribault, Minnesota. Here he had a position as bookkeeper. He had a family, several sons and one daughter. In 1889 it was my pleasure to visit them. The daughter and the oldest son died. The parents are buried in Faribault.

I do not have the married names of father's sisters. A widowed niece with her three children came to America, a Mrs. Bentlich. Her son Anton came to this country in 1888. He came direct to our home in Illinois. He did china painting and got work with a well known firm in Chicago. Later his mother and sister came to be with him. Here I once made them a visit. Mrs. Bentlich was the daughter of one of father's sisters. When in 1892 father again visited Norway, he had a very pleasant visit with a daughter of another sister who was married to a jeweler in Stavanger, his childhood home. She also had died before my visit to Norway. It was a never to be forgotten day that I spent in the city where father was born and spent his childhood, walk the old cobble stone streets, sit on a bench by the water ("Bredevandet") he often spoke of, visiting the cathedral all alone, stand by the baptismal font where he was baptized, kneel at the altar railing where he had knelt, thanking God for my father and what he had meant to us all.

During father's stay in Bergen, he was converted. It was during the Haugean awakenings or revivals. In his struggles he contacted many of its leaders, who became his life long friends. The Bible became a precious companion. It was studied. It was God's Holy Word to him. He would spend hours at night on his knees in meditation and prayer. He would take walks in the lonely, quiet woods to be alone with his God -- to commune with Him, and I am sure he experienced what we sing in one of our hymns, "And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me that I am His own." When he got the assurance that God had delivered him from the power of darkness and had translated him into the Kingdom of His dear Son, "in whom we have redemption,

through His blood, even the forgiveness of sin," the Peace of God that passeth all understanding became his. Now, his one desire was to serve the Lord; and when he read about the dire need of teachers for the children of emigrants in America, he said: "Lord, here am I, send me." His employer thought it absurd that such a fine and exemplary young man -- with such a bright future in the business world -- should decide on such a career, and offered him attractive positions. But father was firm.

In May, 1850, at the age of 21 years, he said goodbye to his relatives and friends and left his dear homeland for distant America. The first winter was spent in Neenah, Wisconsin, where he taught parochial school and also conducted religious services. The following year he went to Lisbon, Illinois, where a number of young Christian people, whom he had contacted on the boat, urged him to come. He walked all the way, a distance of about 300 miles. Here he also taught and conducted the religious services. Besides this, he undertook another big job for a man of his age: he translated a book of sermons, a "postille" by Johan Arndt, from German into Norwegian. His study was a very small back room in a small pioneer school house. The book was printed in Norway in about 12,000 copies and was well received both here and in Norway. The settlers, having now organized the Lisbon congregation, extended a call to him to become their minister. He hesitated, but after much thought and prayer, he accepted on the condition that he be granted a year for further study. This request was granted, and the year of 1853 and 1854 was spent in hard study at a German Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In 1854 he was ordained to the ministry by Dr. W. Sihler of the Missouri Synod, after which he began his work as a minister at the age of 25 years. Thus was God's leading.

MOTHER'S FAMILY

Her Parents:

Sjur Olsen Haaland - - - 1799--1846

Mette Tveiten Haaland - - 1804--1879

Their Children:

1. Ole - - - 1829--1885

2. Ragnhild - 1831--1912

3. Aamund - - 1832

4. Erik - - - 1834--1913

5. Christen - 1836

6. Sever - - 1839--1884

7. Bjorn - - - 1841

8. Haldor - - 1843--1869

9. Malachias- 1846--1846
(six months)

Two half-sisters:

10. Anna - - - 1849--1871

11. Ingeborg - 1851--1943

The daughters of Grandmother
and her second husband,
Rasmus Jacobsen Dalen.

Mother

Mother was born in Etne, Bergens stift, Norway (Bergen diocese), March 28, 1831. She was the only daughter of Sjur and Mette Haaland, the only sister of eight brothers. Her father was a farmer and owned his farm and home.

A century ago, what was called the "America fever" spread throughout Norway. Her father caught it, sold his farm to embark for distant America, the land of the future. Friends and neighbors thought it absurd for a man as well situated financially as he, and with such a large family, to pull up stakes and leave for something unknown. They thought he was crazy. But he was firm in his decision. In his mind he visualized a future with opportunities and possibilities in this new land for his many sons that would not be theirs in Norway. It took faith and courage to make such a step, not only for him, but for his wife as well. Can we--even in a small measure--realize what it meant to a mother to break up a home, with nine children ranging in age from 2 months to 17 years, and say goodbye to relatives and friends without the hope of ever seeing them again? I think not.

Mother was only a newly confirmed girl of 15 years. The instruction and spiritual help and guidance by her beloved pastor, together with the influence of the Haugean revivals in the church and home, brought her to a full surrender to God. At this early age she was converted. It can truly be said that her one desire was to live a life consecrated to the Lord and serve her Lord and Master Jesus Christ. At this time she faithfully shared the responsibility of caring for her younger brothers and was a great comfort to her parents.

Their Journey

In the spring of 1846 -- now 99 years ago -- they, together with two other families of their acquaintance, said farewell to their beloved homeland. They sailed from Bergen in one of the best boats of that day, the "Kong Sverre". Crossing the Atlantic in a sailboat was not a week's pleasure trip in a palatial steamboat. It was a six and a half week's voyage from Bergen to New York. What a joy it must have been to step ashore and to know that they had safely reached America, the country that was to be their future home. The New York of a century ago was not the New York of today. They were yet far away from their destination, the Middle West. There were no streamlined trains scooting across the country in those days. From New York they traveled by boat up the beautiful Hudson River to Albany. Here they boarded a canal boat drawn by mules to make the trip on the Erie Canal to Buffalo. This was a slow, tedious journey. I remember mother saying that at times the boys would leave the boat and walk alongside the mules. In Buffalo they began their

last boat trip on the Great Lakes, en route to Milwaukee. This trip was very rough and stormy -- so stormy that they at times despaired of ever reaching their destination. It took seven days to make the trip. At last they reached Milwaukee, then a small town. They were a tired group. They had suffered more hardships on the trip from New York to Milwaukee than on the trip across the Atlantic. In Milwaukee they were met by earlier settlers from the famous Muskego settlement some 20 miles out in the country. Their "automobiles" were wagons drawn by oxen, a trifle slower going. Here they were welcomed into the pioneer cabins of people from their homeland, whose wonderful hospitality has been described by historians. Hitherto the Lord had helped.

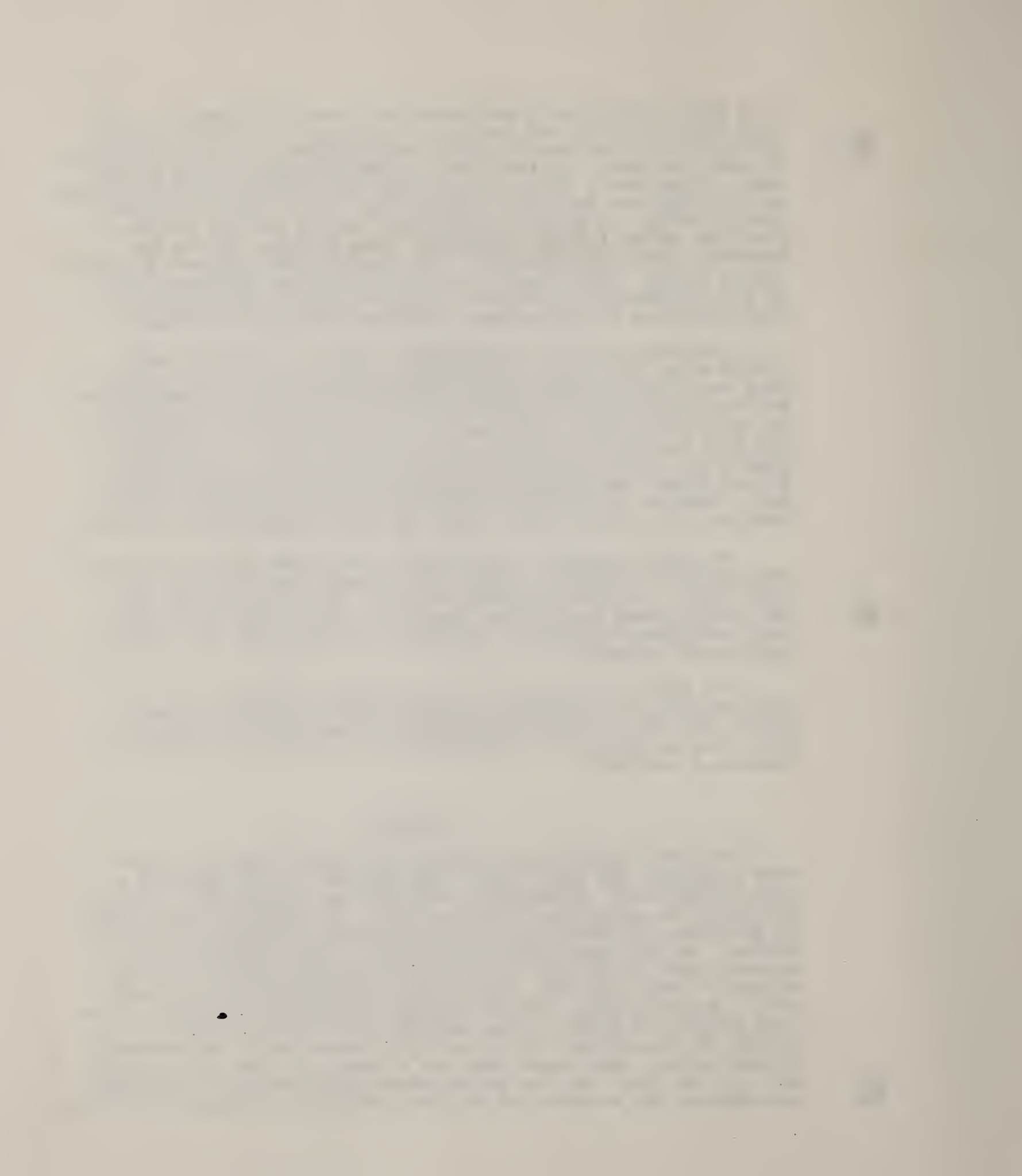
They did not settle in Muskego. After a period of much needed rest, and having purchased a wagon and a team of oxen, they went on to a settlement in Walworth County, near Whitewater, Wisconsin, about 30 miles farther on. Now it was to buy land. He saw a farm of 80 acres that was unusually fine. He wondered why that had not been taken. He soon found out. It had been bought by a land speculator for \$1.25 per acre. Now he wanted \$4 per acre. That was more than the settlers had been able to pay. However, grandfather was somewhat better situated financially; so he immediately bought the farm, paying for it in cash.

The next move was to get a home. With the help of kind and experienced neighbors, a comfortable good-sized log cabin was soon built. -- Now they were settled. This was in July 1846, two months after leaving the homeland. What a thrill of joy they must have experienced in having a home again! The future outlook was bright.

The Bible, devotional books and hymn books were treasured possessions. In word and song they turned to their heavenly Father with praise and thanksgiving for His care and guidance. There was an organized congregation and a small log church with adjoining cemetery.

Hardships

They had barely settled before the family was taken sick with malaria. The baby died. This was but a forerunner of a much harder blow. Grandfather and Ole--the oldest son, 17 years old--were the only ones that were well. In September they drove to Milwaukee, 50 miles distant, to purchase provisions for the winter. On the return trip grandfather became very ill from a severe attack of bilious fever. Upon reaching home he was put to bed, a very sick man. He became steadily worse and in much pain. No nurse care, and the family in bed with malaria. A few days before his death he was suddenly seized with a violent attack of convulsions, after which he became quiet and seemingly without pain. They hoped this was a change for the better--but not so. He died. So two months after their arrival in America, grandmother was a widow and the many children fatherless. His was



the first burial in Skoponong cemetery. This sore bereavement was heavy enough to crush anyone. A dark and dismal future lay ahead. Grandmother lay bedridden until Christmas. Evidently mother recovered sooner, as she and her older brother shouldered the care of the family. How they managed thru this period of unutterable grief, with days of heartache and homesickness, and long, lonely, sleepless nights, only God knows. He was their refuge and strength. It was a hard struggle, but the Lord did not leave them nor forsake them. He carried them through.

After two years Grandmother married again to a widower without children, Rasmus Jakobsen Dalen. A Christian of the Haugean type, a lay preacher and zealous worker among the emigrants when pastoral services were scarce. The smaller boys needed a father's care and Grandmother a helpmate. I have never heard an unkind word said about him by any member of the family. There was no religious school for the children; so the mother and step-father became their teachers, and they did their work well. They had two daughters, Anna and Ingeborg.

A school district was organized and a log school house built in 1848. Teachers were scarce. However, they were wonderfully successful. An English family had settled in the neighborhood a few years previous, a cultured and educated family. The daughter read and spoke several languages, Norwegian fluently. She was procured as teacher. She took an unusual interest in her pupils. During vacations they were invited to her home, one day a week, for further study. Ben and Syver, together with Senator Knute Nelson, their boyhood friend, availed themselves of this opportunity. She also did follow-up work by keeping in touch with them thru correspondence. Uncle Ben kept up such a correspondence and made frequent visits to her home as long as she lived. He never tired of singing her praises. She was Miss Mary Dillon. Her influence followed them through life.

After eight years the family left Whitewater and moved to Dane and Iowa Counties, not far from Madison, Wisconsin. Here the Holland Brothers, as they were called, made their future homes. They engaged in farming and business. They had a joint pioneer, general store in Moscow, Wisconsin. Uncle Ben attended Albion Academy together with Knute Nelson, after which he taught school in Chicago for 12 years. He then returned to Wisconsin. The village of Hollandale was built on his farm and named for him. He was a member of the state legislature for some terms. The brothers were all married.

During the Civil War 1861-1865, Syver and Haldor enlisted. Haldor was gone for three years. Due to the hardships endured, their health was impaired. When Haldor returned, he was so emaciated that his mother did not know him. They never fully recovered their former health.

Mother had no higher education, but in her youth she went thru a school of experience not acquired on the school bench. A school of self-sacrifice through affliction, sorrow, and pioneer hardships that gave her a sympathetic understanding of others passing through hardships, that fitted her for her future life as a pastor's wife.

OUR FAMILY

Parents:

P. A. Rasmussen - - - - - 1829--1898

Ragnhild Holland Rasmussen - 1831--1912

Their Children:

1. Gerhard - - - - - Jan. 26, 1857--1943

2. Rasmus Olaus - - - - - June 24, 1859--1885

3. Mattie Serene - - - - - Feb. 25, 1861--1894

4. Wilhelm Augustin - - - - - Feb. 1, 1863

5. Anna Mathilde - - - - - Jan. 4, 1865

6. Henry Edmund - - - - - May 13, 1867

7. Lena Marie - - - - - Nov. 27, 1869--1887

8. Halbert Jacob - - - - - Nov. 5, 1872

9. Peter Andreas Randolph - Sept. 26, 1876--1887

Father and mother were married May 6, 1855, by the pioneer pastor Elling Eielsen, at the close of a Sunday morning service. Not at the altar of a beautifully decorated church as in our day, but before an improvised altar in a pioneer log school house in Primrose, Dane County, Wisconsin, where mother had her home. The honorable Oley Nelson of Slater, Iowa, well known in our church, once told me that as a boy he was present at the services that Sunday. As commander-in-chief of the G. A. R. in an address at a soldiers' reunion, he describes this school house. As I think it may be of interest to the younger generation, I will pass it on in his own words -- just a few excerpts. "The Bowerson school house was erected by donations of logs from the patrons; some furnished two logs, others four, which were hewn and hauled to the school site and there erected by gratuitous labor. A subscription was raised to buy the rough boards for floor and windows, also a stove long enough to receive three foot wood, and benches for the school children to sit on, made of slabs of logs called hones. They were from eight to twelve feet long, without anything to rest your back on. This log school house also served as a church. I can recall as a boy the first couple married in that school house, and that was none other than the grand, illustrious man, Rev. P. A. Rasmussen."

Immediately after their marriage they drove with horse and buggy to their future home in Lisbon, Illinois, a distance of about 150 miles. Father was 26 and mother 24 years old. The village of Lisbon and the country round about had been settled since the mid thirties, 20 years earlier. When Lisbon was a prairie, a group of fine, cultured, educated Christian people from New York state -- traveling westward in covered wagons -- found this to be the Goshen of their search for a new home. Evidently they were people of means. They built the village of Lisbon. Stores were built. A good-sized stone church and a two story stone school house were erected. To my knowledge, these are still standing, as are the homes they built. Many were comfortable frame buildings, but a few were smaller mansions. How well I remember Mr. Sherril's stone house and their carriage with a high seat for a liveried colored driver, and the octagon frame building -- with porticos all around -- of the Page family. The farm homes were also large and comfortable. In my mind I can see them as they were, with the names of the owners, Knox, Wilcox, Mac Ewen, Langdon, Kelsey, Tuttle, etc., not to forget the two Moores -- the Lisbon merchants. Childhood memories! It now belongs to the past. I can remember only two log cabins, one in Lisbon and one a short distance away, and they belonged to two colored families.

But back to father and mother. The first year was lived in what was called the Seminary. This building had been a tavern on the main highway between Chicago and Ottawa. It was bought by the Elling Eielsen church group for a school of higher education -- for the sum of \$1,800. Father was to teach the few students until further arrangements could be made. Because of

a split in the group the following year, the school was discontinued. The building is still standing and is a farm home.

At this time, 1856, father bought a home near the church about two miles west of Lisbon, the home now known as the Holland home. Here they lived for 10 years. Five of their nine children were born there, Gerhard, Olaus, Mattie, William, and myself. At one time two families shared the home. The main building is still just as it was. The rooms are just as they were. An addition was later added to it by Uncle Erik Holland. Mother's first carpet for the parlor was made of wool yarn, carded, spun, dyed and woven by her mother. How often I have wished that a sample of it had been saved for us to see. But such things were not thought of. The trees and evergreens seen in the picture were planted by father.

During this first decade of father's ministry, his services were widespread and far-reaching. According to what Dr. Norlie says in his book on "Norwegian Lutheran Congregations in America" (Norsk Luth. Menigheter i Amerika), he served, besides his home congregation at Lisbon, the following places:

1. Trinity Lutheran Church, Chicago - - - 1854--1865
2. Primrose Cong., Dane Co., Wisconsin - 1854--1860
3. Black Earth, Wisconsin - - - - - 1856
4. Perry Congregation, Wisconsin - - - - 1854--1860
5. Stoughton Cong., Wisconsin - - - - - 1860
6. Winchester, Wisconsin - - - - - 1850--1851
7. York Congregation, Wisconsin - - - - - 1855--1860
8. Blanchardville, Wisconsin - - - - - 1855--1860
9. St. Petri Cong., Story City, Iowa - - 1857--1860
10. Calamus, Iowa - - - - - 1861--1862
11. Holden Cong., Goodhue Co., Minn. - - - 1864
12. Dale Congregation, Goodhue Co., Minn. - 1856--1863
13. Trinity Congregation, St. Louis, Mo. - 1857--1859
14. Fox River Congregation, Norway, Ill. - 1860--1880
15. Platville Congregation, Illinois - - - 1866--1867
16. Pontiac (Rowe), Illinois - - - - - 1866--1867
17. Dwight, Illinois - - - - - 1860--1866
18. Lee County, Illinois - - - - - 1869

As you see, they were served for shorter or longer periods. Much of this was follow-up work, as you will see. More and more immigrants came to Lisbon and vicinity, where friends and relatives had preceded them. Here they found that most of the land was taken. A committee of four men was sent in search of a new place to settle. They were gone about two weeks. I am giving their report in full, as translated by Andrew Maland. It is a unique and wonderful report:

"We have fulfilled our mission and found a land that far exceeded our fondest expectations in beauty and fruitfulness. There are gently rolling sunny hills without any rocks; of rich pastures without danger of floods. It has good water and sheltering woods along the water courses.

"It is surely a land like unto Caleb's Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, but unlike that renowned land, there are no enemies to make us fear. There are no Jebusites and Amorites, nor the powerful sons of Anak, who barred the entrance to God's chosen people in the promised land.

"At one time, no doubt, red Indians galloped over the prairie, hunting buffaloes, but they have now gone to more distant hunting grounds. Now the land is lying in quiet peace, waiting for us to come. Brothers, it is the land that the Lord has prepared for us.

"From Norway's mountain passes we came, where we had to break stony ground on steep hills, between floods and slides, where our pastures lay in ice-bound and shady hills. Here we can comfortably stretch our limbs in peaceful pursuit, following plow and scythe and the rich soil will abundantly repay us for our work.

"From the government we have secured papers which will secure our right to the land for all time to come."

A colony was formed, a congregation was organized, and a caravan of 106 souls, in covered wagons, drawn by oxen and horses, with herds of cattle alongside, left the Lisbon area for central Iowa, 300 miles farther northwest, for their new settlement, near what is now Huxley, Iowa. They soon had a lay preacher ordained to be their minister. The trek consisted of 25 wagons. In a few months five more came to join them. The journey was made in three weeks. This was in 1855.

In 1857 another caravan of 27 covered wagons left for central Iowa. They located near the present Story City. On their treks these God fearing people kept the Sabbath. Saturday evenings they formed their wagons into a circle, wherein they worshiped on Sundays.

Other families moved to Goodhue County, Minnesota. At a district meeting in 1935, a woman told me that at a pioneer open air service, father had baptized 32 children, under the branches of a large tree. Evidently on his first visit to Goodhue County, Minnesota.

As I understand it, father made annual and semi-annual trips to his former parishioners in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. During these years, transportation was bad; very few railroads. Until the Rock Island built its road through Morris, Illinois, father's nearest railroad station was Aurora, 25 miles away. Stations near his destinations were equally far away. The trips were strenuous, but he never spared himself. On one trip to Iowa he was taken seriously ill and was bedridden for several weeks. Another time he barely reached home. Outside the gate he fell in a faint, after which he again was sick for some time. As soon as he recovered, it was to be off again, busy in the home

congregations or away. These were not easy days for mother at home with several small children. There were no telephones, no way of sending a telegram, and poor mail services. These were pioneer hardships.

There was much sickness among the pioneers thru these early years. The Iowa settlers were stricken with a terrible typhoid fever epidemic in the late fifties. With inadequate living conditions and little or no medical care, the few that were well would help as best they could. Whole families were stricken. Their care depended upon kind neighbors, and in those days father was there. When visiting in Iowa years ago, a man said to me, "I will never forget your father. I was one of the many that were sick, lying in a low upstairs room. In a dazed condition, I could see your father moving quietly about from bed to bed, giving spiritual comfort."

Contagious sicknesses never kept him from the sick. Once, when visiting a man lying at death's door, with the dreadful cholera of those days, the man lifted his hand to bid him a last goodbye. Without hesitation father took it, and with a kindly pressure bade him farewell. Never once did he bring any of the contagious diseases into the home. He did what he considered his duty, depending on the Lord's care and protection.

Mother would at times accompany him on his trips, especially to her old home in Wisconsin. In the absence of bridges, creeks and rivers were forded. Usually this went all right. But once she said that they got into deep water in crossing the Fox River. Mother had a child in her arms -- very likely Gerhard -- when the water came into the buggy, so that both she and father had to lean back and put their feet on the dash board to keep dry. It was a perilous crossing, but the Lord brought them safely through.

Mother's hardest trial in this first decade of their married life, was father's going to Norway in 1859. The trip was made in order to get men as pastors for the settlements he had served in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. He could not continue as he had. His going at this time was not easy for either one, as an addition to the family was expected during his absence. In writing about this father said, "It was hard on mother to have me go, but as she knew that my going was in the Master's service, she would not stand in the way. However, I know that many a tear was shed and many a prayer was sent up to our Heavenly Father for my safety as well as her own." Her parents came from Wisconsin to be with her. When, during a stay in Kristiania (Oslo), a letter came saying that their two year old son Gerhard had a brother and that all was well, he wrote her a letter telling her how happy he was to hear that all was well. "You can imagine what that meant to me, as I have been worried and restless because of the uncertainty of how it would go with you. How good the Lord has been to us in so many ways! May it make me more humble and may my heart be moved to love Him as never before. God grant this for Jesus' sake! He that hitherto has helped both you and me will continue to help us for His name's sake. So I commit myself and you, and our children,

wholly into His loving care. Greet my little unknown son with a loving kiss from me." He spoke of the joy he felt when again he was re-united with his family and seeing for the first time his second son, a curly headed, blue-eyed baby boy. The first thing he did after the birth of their first child was to write to his dear mother, beginning the letter with these words: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His Holy Name.." We thank God for our Christian parents!

In the very first years of his ministry, he saw the need of good Christian literature. Being a man of action, he was instrumental in the organizing of a Publishing Society, within the congregation, to print educational and devotional books, to encourage good reading. Many good books were printed and well received. A unique organization and very likely the only one of its kind. The printing was done in St. Louis, Missouri. Once, as he was going there on a business trip, he met with an accident. A man of the congregation was to take him to the station. Evidently Aurora, as the Fox River had to be crossed. They drove in a spring wagon with a team of horses. In fording the river they got into deep water; the wagon box loosened and drifted down stream. They jumped into the water. Father could swim; the man could not. So father had to pull him along, while he held to the reins. They reached shore safely; but father's traveling bag, containing \$600, that he was to pay the publishing company, was lost. No trace of the money was ever found.

The congregation had three churches in this first decade. A small church, 36 by 24, and 12 feet high, was built in 1851. This was built before father became the pastor. In 1857 an addition was added, in the form of a cross, at a cost of \$700. In 1861 this was torn down and a new larger church, seating 350, was built at a cost of \$1,500. It had a steeple 75 feet high. The building was 56 by 36 and 16 feet high. The Norwegian Synod held its meeting in this church in 1870.

Twice he edited church papers. The first, "Kirkelig Tidende" was begun in 1856. This was discontinued in 1862 upon his joining the Norwegian Synod, as this church body had its church paper. Later from 1877 to 1887 he edited the "Opbyggelses og Missionsblad", a semi-monthly, more on the devotional and edifying order. He was both editor and publisher.

Shortly after his coming to America, he met a man in sore financial distress. He had borrowed some money, and the interest was extremely high. He was not able to meet the payment. The creditor threatened to take his one cow as payment. Father had a little money after his traveling expenses had all been paid; so he said, "I have \$50 that you may have. I won't need it." That was just like father. Many years later, when the episode was forgotten, he unexpectedly received the \$50. They had not forgotten. They wanted to pay the interest, too, but this he would not accept. "Cast your bread upon the water, and it will return in many days."

The Civil War and President Abraham Lincoln's Death

An elderly woman, some years ago, told me that she was present at the service in 1865 when father announced the death of President Lincoln. She was then a girl of 15 years. She is still living and is now 94 years old.

News did not travel fast in those days. They were not flashed around the world over the radio as now. Telegrams did not reach the smaller country towns, and daily papers were unheard of. It was a Sunday morning. As father entered the pulpit, he said, "I do not usually make announcements from the pulpit, but today I have a sad message to bring you. Our beloved president Abraham Lincoln has been assassinated." As he spoke, tears rolled down his cheeks, and she did not think there was a dry eye in the audience. It was just at the end of the four-year war, when the country needed his guidance. His untimely death was a great loss.

Father was a Republican, and he never failed in his duty to vote, whenever possible. Millard Fillmore was the president when he came to this country, and McKinley was the president when he died.

They passed thru the hardships of the war. Many were called into service. Some returned; others did not, just as now. Mother had two brothers in the service. They returned but greatly impaired in health. Prices soared then as now, food as well as wearing material.

This telling of father's and mother's pioneer decade, as it has been told us, may contribute to a better understanding of that time. The courageous hearts of the pioneers -- in those trying years -- and the successful outcome. Blessed be their memory!

The Parsonage

Our Home for Thirty Years

Many memories flash through my mind as my thoughts drift back to the days of my childhood and youth. In my mind I can see things just as they were, so many years ago. Some one has said that memories are investments for life. Now I will try to pass them on to the younger members of our family. The parsonage was bought by the congregation from one of the early settlers, a Mr. Wright. It stood some little distance from the road, in the center of a very large yard enclosed by a white picket fence. The house faced south. Two rows of evergreens, one on each side of the pathway leading from the gate to the front entrance of the house, were planted by father. A group of red rose bushes and two large snowball bushes, like small trees, were to the right, and one yellow rosebush near the house. An elm tree with its spreading branches almost touched the roof of the south-east corner of the house, and a beautiful hard maple tree, gorgeous in its fall colorings, stood like a sentinel in the center, not far from the house. To the west of the yard was a large apple orchard. This was almost enclosed by other trees. To the south near the road there

was a butternut and a hard maple tree among others. To the west a small grove of locust trees, and to the north large walnut and cottonwoods.

To the east of the yard was the garden of the earlier years, with its arbor of grapevines, and its many currant and gooseberry bushes, together with peach and pear trees and ample space for a vegetable garden. The rear yard had the usual red barn with white trim and a windmill, beyond which was the pasture where the cattle grazed. So much for the outside.

The house was an ordinary frame building painted white with green blinds. The first picture shows the house as it was from 1866 to 1881, the first 15 years of our stay there. Only the main building had an upstairs, with three bed rooms and a store room. The second picture shows how it was remodeled in 1881. The upstairs was raised and a second floor added to the side section, giving two more bed rooms.

The main floor was large and roomy. It had a large parlor off the front hall, a sitting room, a study, two bed rooms, a kitchen and summer kitchen. It was simply furnished in the early days. As the years went by, the furnishings changed in the homes, so also in ours; from rag carpets to ingrain and from ingrain to the brussels carpet in the parlor, as also the parlor table lamp to the fancy, ornamental hanging lamp, from white muslin curtains to lace curtains, from the organ to a Chickering piano, from the old coal heater to the nickel trimmed and pica-paned doors of a large self-feeder. A few comfortable chairs made the furnishings somewhat complete.

The kitchen had a long extension table seating ten or twelve, and a large kitchen range with the luxury of a reservoir for hot water. The summer kitchen, adjoining the kitchen, also had a stove. The cooking, baking and fruit canning was done here in the summer time. It also served as a laundry. The big washings were done by the old washboard method. The heavy iron flatirons were heated on top of the stove. All kitchen utensils were of iron, the large round-bottomed kettles, the skillets, griddles and waffle irons.

There is not much to be said about the bed rooms. Only one had a closet. Bed ticks filled with clean straw or soft corn husks were our mattresses. Some of these were later replaced by the bought mattresses. Our bed rooms were unheated; only the spare bed room had a tiny heater.

These were no hardships. We were just as happy and contented -- perhaps more so -- than those of the present generation, with the many modern improvements. There are still many without these, throughout the length and breadth of our land. Although we enjoy them and are thankful for having them, they are not the essentials for making a happy home. It is the people within. They alone can make or break a home. The house is secondary.

Our Childhood

We were seven in the family, father, mother, and five children, when we moved into the parsonage. I was the baby. The four younger children -- Henry, Lena, Halbert and Randolph -- were born here. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" was truly the motto of our parents. The children were a gift of God, a loan, as mother once put it. We were consecrated to the Lord and brought up in a Christian atmosphere and instructed in His word. There was parental authority. "Honor thy father and thy mother" was not an empty phrase. There was discipline in the home, something very often lacking in homes today. We were taught obedience to our parents. Wilful wrongdoing received its punishment, but in love. Firmness and kindness went hand in hand. There was love and understanding.

How well I remember the family seated around the long table at mealtime. We were all there. At the morning meal there was family worship. Father, seated at the head of the table, would read from the Bible or some devotional book and offer prayer, ending in the singing of a hymn. We had our hymn books. It was not a God's minute. Upon leaving the table we were taught to say a thank you (Tak for maten).

The evening worship was not held at the table, but later in the evening before we retired. How well I remember the hymns we used to sing, and how, when away from home, my thoughts would fly away to the devotional hour at home, wondering what hymn was sung. So in a way was with them in spirit. What memories do we leave?

On Sundays we went to church. Church going was a family affair. The old and the young worshiped together. There were three churches; so services were held only every two or three weeks. They were lengthy, but only one service. People came long distances, and they wanted and expected long services. As children we did not understand so much of the sermon -- the expounding of the scripture -- but we took part in the singing and enjoyed seeing the little babes in their long, white baptismal dresses carried forward for holy baptism -- and at times there were many -- especially after father had been gone for a time. It was not only that the babies got their names, but that they became the children of God through baptism. I was only two days old when baptized. Communion services, confirmation services, and special mission services with offerings, added to the length of the services. Occasionally the older children were catechised on the church floor, standing on either side of the central aisle. On the Sundays when there were no church services, meetings were held in school houses, conducted by lay people. If at home, the family would gather, a sermon was read, hymns sung and prayers offered. At times we anxiously waited for the end of the sermon, as they were very lengthy. But it did not hurt us to sit still. It taught us the lesson of keeping the Lord's day holy; that it was a day of worship.

"God's word is our great heritage
And shall be ours forever."

Before going to the public school, we had governesses in the home. We had two. One was Miss or "Fröken" Holmboe, the other "Fröken" Wraaman. We were taught reading, writing, grammar, etc., in the Norwegian language. Besides these we -- my sister and I -- were instructed in music and handwork, sewing, knitting, crocheting and embroidery. I remember struggling with eyelet embroidery and needlepoint on canvas. We made a pair of slippers for father, a lily on black background, that he valued highly.

The public school teacher lived with us through the winter of 1872-1873, and she gave us instruction in English. In a recent letter from her daughter in the East, she writes, "Your parents, your home, each of your family had a part in the development of my mother. That side I know well. What splendid people your parents were. They gave so generously both spiritual and cultural help."

Later we attended the public school. We were fortunate in having fine teachers. They were men. All grades were taught by the one teacher. The school house still stands, but has modern equipment. It had a large yard but no shade trees. Here the children played games during the noon period. We played ball, Andy over, drop the handkerchief, crack-the-whip, last couple out, and hid-and-go-seek. We had fun. I can see the entry with its caps and coats, its many dinner pails, and the pail of water with its one dipper for all. Not the sanitation of the school rooms of today.

The last day of the school year was always a big day. The pupils came, dressed in their best bib and tucker. The afternoon was open to visitors, and parents came to see the wonderful achievements of their offspring, taking part in the program. Prose and poetry was committed to memory. I can recall that as a little girl I recited my first little piece. I have never forgotten it. It was on temperance. Here it is:

"Cold water, cold water, oh, that is the drink.
How strange and how foolish that many should think
That whisky or brandy, the dram keepers sell,
Is good as the water we draw from the well."

As we grew older, we committed pages of prose to memory and usually got through with the ordeal all right.

One of my earliest childhood recollections center about the Synod meeting in 1870, with a house-full of ministers. I was only five years old. One of the ministers insisted on taking me home with him. It frightened me. No one ever knew that when they were to leave I ran into the barn to hide; and not until they had gone, did I venture out, a great burden lifted from my little heart. The fear of being taken away from father and mother and home was removed.

Another instance that has never been forgotten: Some people had a mania for scaring children by telling hair-raising

stories about gypsies' stealing children. One time Henry and I were walking in the road, when we saw an unusual wagon coming along. Immediately we thought they were gypsies; so we hurriedly went into the neighbor's house, near our home, to hide until the wagon had gone by. There was no one at home, but being acquainted we went in. The doors were open, and we went in. We were watching -- when, lo and behold -- the wagon stopped at the gate. They had seen us. Now, what should we do! We had to hide. We knew there was a tiny closet off the bedroom. Into it we went. We were as quiet as mice. However, no one came in to look for us; so after a time we tried to get out. We were suffocating. Now we became frightened. We couldn't open the door. We were locked in. We pounded the door and yelled for help, but were not heard. I guess we prayed. Henry fooled with the little lock continually -- and at last it opened and we were saved. The closet is still there and very likely the same little lock.

Besides the public school we had several months of parochial school. The early settlers had built a school house that was known as the Norwegian school house, to be used for religious schooling and Sunday prayer meetings. Here the older children first went to parochial school. The building had a small room in the rear, for the school teacher. On a visit to Illinois, Gerhard had his picture taken, standing outside the door. The old landmark is no more. The building was torn down some years ago. It should have been preserved as a memorial to the pioneers that built it. Not necessarily where it was. It might have been moved -- and kept as a relic of the past.

So much for our childhood.

Our Youth

Great changes were now taking place. The early Eastern settlers-- as they grew older--sold their farms and homes and moved to the cities. Having prospered financially, the Norwegian settlers bought their farms. Others built their own homes. For miles around it now became a well established Norwegian community. The congregation grew. The church built in 1861 became too small. In 1870 it was torn down and a new beautiful church was built with a seating capacity of from 1,000 to 1,200. It was said to be the largest Norwegian Lutheran church in America at the time. How well I remember it, with its stained glass windows, wide center aisle, two side aisles covered with mattings, the large pillars, the altar in white and gold, with its oil paintings, the leather cushioned kneeling pads, the red carpet, the red velvet gold-fringed altar table and pulpit coverings, the large gallery with its broad matting-covered stairways and the entrance hall. But best of all, the well-filled pews. The oil paintings were given by father and mother. In the spring of 1925 the church was destroyed by fire and nothing was saved. Sparks from a bonfire started the fire. Now nothing but memories remain.

At the age of 14 years we were prepared for confirmation. The instruction was very thorough. The instruction books -- the epitome or explanation of Luther's Catechism, the Bible history of that day,

and hymns, had to be committed to memory. The classes were large and the meetings lengthy. Father was known to be an outstanding catechist. Never-to-be-forgotten memories from that time have followed the many catechumens through life.

After confirmation came higher education. Gerhard was sent away to school before confirmation age. Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, had a preparatory department, and at the age of 12 years he was sent there. It was hard on mother to have him leave home so early, but father believed in church schools.

We loved our home. There is no spot on earth like a good Christian home. As the children grew to young manhood and womanhood, a fine comradeship with father and mother developed. An intimate companionship we enjoyed through life.

During the school year the family was smaller. The older children were away at school. These were far away, Monona Academy, Madison, Wisconsin; Luther College, Decorah, Iowa; and Capitol University, Columbus, Ohio. Because of the distance and expense, there was no coming home for vacations. If at times they could come for Christmas, it truly was a happy holiday for all. Christmas was always made much of in the home. Preparations began early. Mother supervised the household duties and looked after the holiday eats.

Father would make and decorate the Christmas tree. I say make. That is just what he did. There were no evergreen trees to be had. He would select and cut down a small tree of some kind and saw off the branches within a certain distance from the stem. Then he would cut branches -- varying in size -- from our front yard evergreens, fasten them securely to the short stubs on the tree, hiding the fastenings -- and, lo and behold -- there stood as nice a tree as a real one.

There was much secrecy. The door to the parlor was kept locked; so we did not see the tree until we saw it in its candlelit beauty Christmas Eve. Then, dressed in our best, we first sat down to the festive Christmas Eve dinner. There was, as I remember it, the usual rice, topped with raisins, sugar, and cinnamon, a pork spare rib roast ("ribbens stek") or lutefisk with the usual accessories, after which came the small Christmas cakes, fruits and nuts. The Christmas Gospel was read by father, followed by prayer and the singing of "Holy Night" and "Thy Little Ones, Dear Lord, are We." ("Her kommer dine arme smaa"). When we were smaller, we children stood in a row while singing the last hymn, so it could truly be said ("her staa vi nu i flok og rad, om dig, vort skjønne hjerteblad.") Now the parlor door was opened, and we entered with many an oh!--oh! on our lips upon seeing the beautifully lit tree with its homemade trims and heaps of parcels below. Such delight! There were many gifts, but they were usually useful articles-- things we needed. As we grew older, we shared in the gift giving. It was Christmas! How we all enjoyed it! However, we were always reminded of the one great Christmas gift, the Christ Child born in Bethlehem.

As father had three congregations, the Christmas festival lasted a long time. Three services in succession. Christmas Day in the large main church, Second day in the North Prairie Church, and the Third in the Fox River Church. It was the same at Easter. Father never preached the same sermon, as many of the parishioners would attend the several services. The Christmas season did not end until Epiphany, January 6th.

As a rule, the summer months were spent at home. We did not crave any outside amusements. The home environment supplied our needs. We had each other, and there was always work to do, both inside and outside. Father was very considerate of mother and wanted her to have help. He was a good provider and very generous. Help was not an expensive luxury in those days. One could get a girl of mediocre ability for two dollars per week. They were dependable. They often stayed on for years. Three maids were with us for at least five years each. Mother was very kind and considerate to them. They loved her.

Mother was a tailoress. I think she made the clothes for the older boys, up to confirmation age. We girls were early taught to sew and in our youth made our own dresses, besides other household sewing. In the earlier years mother did the sewing by hand, but father soon bought her an enclosed Howe sewing machine. Stockings were home knit. Mother always had a knitting on hand. Her hands were never idle.

Carpets were tacked to the floor. A layer of clean straw was spread evenly over the floor, and the carpet stretched over it. I do not know why this was done, for warmth or to prolong the wear of the carpet. It was used only under ingrain and rag carpets.

Getting the boys off to college for the school year was no easy job. Clothing could not be sent out to be dry cleaned. They were brushed, cleaned and pressed at home. Stiff white bosom shirts and collars had to be ironed, ties cleaned, and everything mended. It all meant work. It was not only for one, but at times for three or four, yes, even five. I often think of this when I see how now the clothing comes back from the cleaners, the shirts and collars from the laundry, all ready to be packed. Even if laundered at home, there are no stiff bosom shirts to iron. They were a nuisance.

Father always supervised the apple picking in the fall. We had wonderful fruit -- belle flowers, russets, snow apples and many others. The trees had been planted in virgin soil, and there was no spraying of trees and shrubbery. Not so now. The fruit was carefully placed in bins for winter use. Father took great pride in the orchard. It was fun to help harvest the fruit. Not quite so interesting to dig and store the potatoes.

The canning season was a busy season. Berries were picked, not in quart boxes, but in large pails. Currants had to be stemmed and cherries pitted. Buying canned fruit and vegetables was unheard of, as was the buying of bread and cakes. Everything was home-made. Big batches of bread baked, cookie jar filled, and butter churned and packed in jars.

We always had plenty of milk. I recall the hanging shelves in the cellar with their many milk pans topped with rich, heavy cream. We helped churn the butter and often found it to be a long, tedious job. But, oh, the rich buttermilk we had.

We had our own chickens. Turkeys were harder to raise. Every year, before Thanksgiving, a Mr. Mason sent us a fine, big turkey with his compliments. He gave one to every clergyman in the community as an appreciation of their work.

Beef and pork was salted and packed for winter use, but much fresh meat was bought. Home prepared dried beef and sausage meat had a different flavor from what was bought.

Mother was a good manager, an economical genius, as one of my brothers put it. If she had not been, it would never have been possible to educate the children as was done. At the same time, both she and father were generous to the limit.

Our pleasures were limited to the home. We were a cheerful, happy family, with plenty of good reading material and much music, both instrumental and vocal. I can see the parlor with the square Chickering piano covered with a fine green cloth, with the borders embroidered in gold. I still have it. On top and at the side were other instruments used by the boys. There was a guitar, a violin, a cornet, and a trombone. My older sister was a fine musician. There were the classics -- Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, and others. Also popular music of the day, hymns with variations, "Moonlight on the Hudson", "Song of the Alps", etc., and duets such as "Il Trovatore" and "Poet and Peasant". Many vocal selections, both solos and duets. The gospel hymns were much used for group singing, as was the Norwegian songbook "Harpen". This now seems to be a lost art. It is the radio that entertains.

Croquet was a pleasant and much enjoyed game. When I see it played on a small plot in a city backyard, it looks like child play to me, compared with our large smooth croquet ground with the arches far apart, making the game a real achievement. The men often enjoyed ball and horse shoe games.

Both father and the boys took great pride in the horses. There were no automobiles and paved roads. At times the roads were smooth, but often terribly dusty. We inhaled dust. In the spring it was mud, mud, mud. This was often so deep we had to stop ever so often to prod the sticky black mud from between the spokes of the wheels, with big strong sticks taken along for this purpose. If it froze in this condition; the roads became almost impassable; they were so rough. Much of father's time was spent on these roads. Often one appointment, a sick call, a funeral, a wedding, or a confirmant class, would take all day, if some distance away. It was not speeding along a highway in a fine automobile, able to time oneself almost to the minute. It reminds me of an experience I once had. I was returning home by train to Morris, about 12 miles from home. Here I was met by my brother Halbert and one of his friends. The roads were terrible, deep sticky mud. Some distance

out something went wrong. The horses and front wheels were detached from the buggy. They took the horses and left for the nearest farm home for needed repairs, while I remained in the back seat of the buggy on a slant, with the front wheels gone. Two farmers went by in their wagons. I knew them both. The one went by without paying any attention to me in my dilemma. The other stopped, smiling at my awkward situation, and offered help. Would I come with him? I thanked him, saying they had gone for help and I would wait. They soon returned and we got home safely. Somehow that episode reminded me of the good Samaritan; one went by, and the other wanted to be of help.

The roads were not always thus. They were often good, and we had many enjoyable rides. We had good buggies. Spending so much time on the road, father needed comfort. I remember one that was enclosed almost like an automobile, also a low one-seated carriage having lamps at each side. This was stolen. I must tell about that. We had a small pet dog. His name was Trip. Very often he slept in the house. One night he was outside, and he made a terrible commotion. He barked and he barked, but no one paid any attention to it, thinking he was barking at some other dog. Upon going to the barn in the morning, they found the horses, a new set of harnesses and the carriage gone. Stealing in those days was unlocked for. Doors were never locked. Now they knew the cause of Trip's terrible barking. Notices offering a reward of \$200 were put up. After some time the thieves were caught, somewhere near the Mississippi River, as I have been told, and later sent to prison. Horses and carriage were returned, but at a cost of 200 dollars.

Horseback riding was a fine sport. The boys had their saddles, and we girls had ours. We did not ride as the girls do now. We had a side saddle of tan colored leather with a carpet-covered seat, and we wore a long riding skirt. It was great fun to gallop along the country roads. Once my sister had a bad accident. She was going out to give some music lessons, and the horse was saddled and ready. We had some workmen about the house, and one of them said that the saddle was strapped on altogether too tight and he loosened it. She had not gone far before the saddle slipped down the side of the horse. This made the horse crazy. My sister fell to the ground, but the foot was not loosed from the stirrup; so she was dragged along until it was. She escaped without serious injuries.

We had a number of miraculous escapes. I had one that I will never forget. Father was away. I was an 18 year old girl. We needed things from the village about two miles away; so I was to drive in to get them. We had at that time a team of ponies. Father's assistant was returning from church, where he had met with the confirmant class, just as I was leaving. He thought it was risky for me to go alone, being the horses had not been out for several weeks and might be hard to manage and added, "If you will wait until I have had my dinner, I will go with you." I said that I was sure they would be all right, and left. Going, all went well. It began to rain and the horses got chilled while I was making the necessary purchases. Starting for home they became unmanageable, and I soon knew it meant a run-away. They didn't run -- they flew. Before or after I have never seen its equal.

I held on to the reins, trying to keep them in the road. The buggy bounced with such fury and I bounced with it, hitting my head against the top again and again. I was standing pulling at the reins with all my might. Nothing helped. Everything in the buggy, even the seat cushion, was strewn along the roadside. Farmers left their fields and came running to see the outcome, picking up the parcels. A woman came out from her house and said to one of them that a woman had driven by and such unchristian driving ("ukristelig") she had never seen. The folks at home saw me coming, but in an instant we came through the gate that had been left open, flew by the house to the stable door of the barn. Here the ponies got their heads and forefeet in, while the front wheels of the buggy hit the sides of the door opening with a terrific jolt and thud, coming to a sudden stop. The horses were white with foam and trembling. They shook. As for me, I got out of the buggy hatless, with hair flying, saying, "I never had such a ride." I guess I was trembling, too. They praised me for not letting go of the reins and for steering them aright, but I knew that an unseen guide did the managing. How often through life I have felt a guardian angel at my side.

A few more happenings showing God's miraculous care:

1. How my brother Henry was saved from a watery grave. After being graduated from College at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, he planned to do as Gerhard had done -- go to Norway to study theology at the University of Oslo. He and a student friend were going. All arrangements were made. Then a letter came from his friend, saying that after thinking it over, he had decided not to go and asked to be released from his promise. This changed Henry's plans, too; so their steamship reservations were cancelled. Again God's guidance. That boat sank, and not one of the Second cabin passengers was saved. It was the Hekla of the Thingvalla Line. A strange accident. It was a collision of two boats of the same line; and the one went down. Why were these young men saved? Only God knows. Evidently He had work for them to do. Henry has now served his Lord and Master, as a pastor, for more than half a century.

2. Halbert was once in a serious train accident. It was in the dead of night. The coach was overturned. He escaped without serious injuries. In all travels by land and sea, this was the only time a member of the family was in a train wreck.

"All things work together for good to them that love God."

Father's Generosity.

When father made one of his first long trips -- perhaps his first alone -- with horse and buggy, he stopped overnight at some hotel. Knowing very little about the care of horses, and being asked how much oats to feed his horse, he said, "Half a bushel." In the morning the same question was asked and the same answer given. The horse became desperately sick from the overfeeding, and father's stay at the hotel prolonged until the horse got well. He was often reminded of his half bushel givings. One Christmas his gifts were placed in a half bushel basket and given to him with the words, "half a bushel for father." He enjoyed it just as much as we did.

Risky Travel.

Father was going away for an important meeting. Upon their arrival at Morris, the train was already there and ready to pull out. He couldn't reach a coach. Being near the engine, he jumped onto the cow-catcher -- a wedge-shaped frame in the front of a locomotive to remove obstructions on the rails. There he sat until they reached Joliet, the next stop, a distance of about 12 miles. Here he got off and entered a coach.

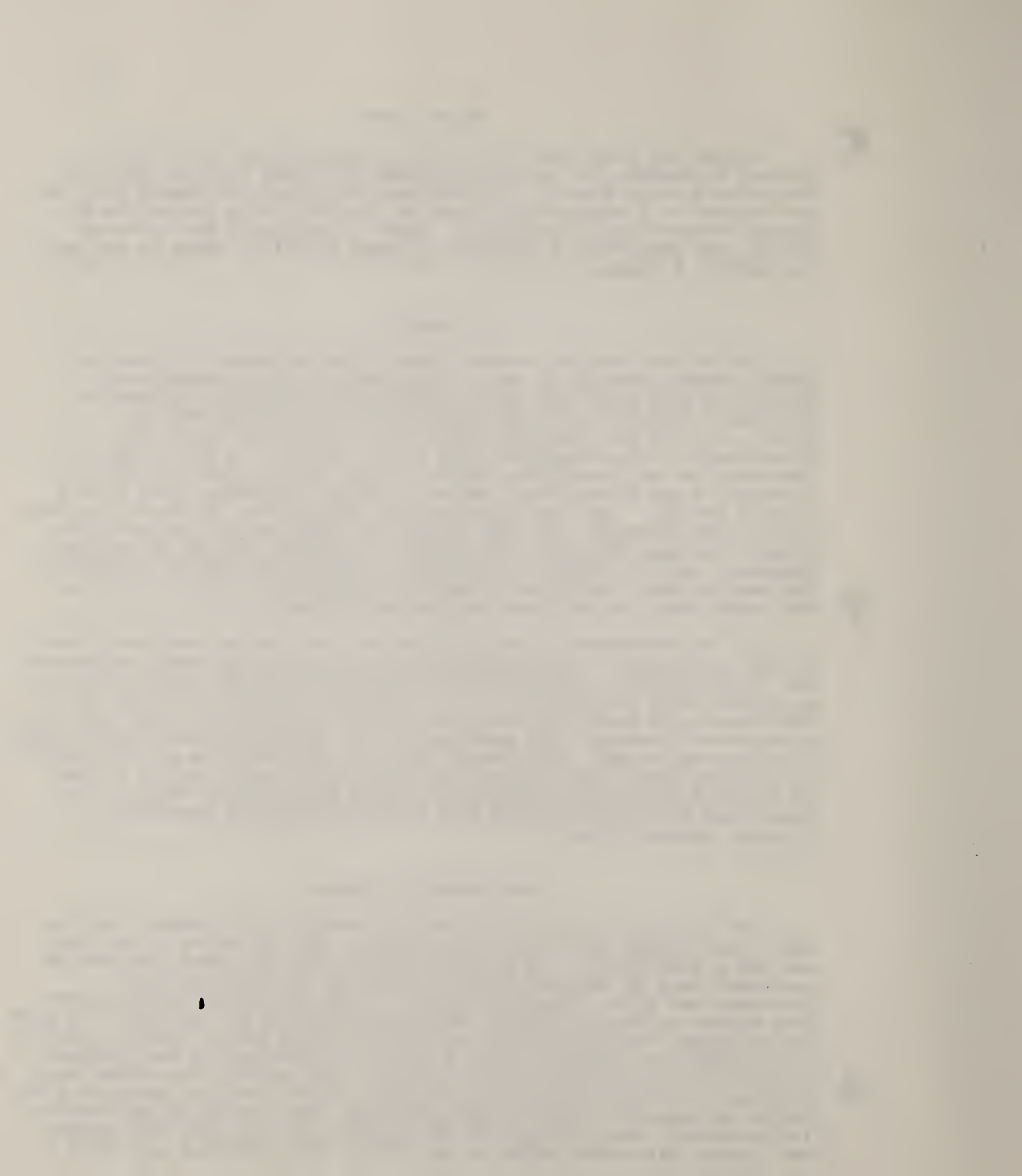
In Danger.

In the late sixties a very strange thing happened. It was at a Sunday morning service in one of the churches some distance away. Mother sat in a front pew with a couple of the smaller children at her side. Gerhard sat in the small enclosure reserved for the pastor, he told me. Services had begun. Father was inside the altar-ring for the liturgical part of the service. A man strode up the aisle and up towards the altar. It was noticed that he carried a weapon, a gun or revolver, and was mumbling something about having to kill father. Some men jumped up and stopped him. He seemed to have super-human strength. It took six men to carry him out and take him home. Poor man, he had become mentally deranged. He had no personal grievance against father. He was only one of many that the horrors of war made insane. He had to be taken to a mental hospital. After he was taken away, the services went on undisturbed.

In the wintertime it was sleighrides. We used to have much snow. We had two cutters -- a one-seated one for general use and a two-seated one for the family. The latter was made by one of the parishioners -- a cabinet maker from Norway -- if I remember correctly. It was fine. The front had a beautiful swan-neck curve. It was a soft dark red, with appropriate trimming. Can anything be more enjoyable than a cutter ride on a fine winter day, with heated bricks as foot warmers and a buffalo robe tucked about you, sailing along the white roads, back of a team of spirited horses with strings of silvery bells around their necks? Those that have never enjoyed such a ride have missed something. "Jingle, jingle Bells."

Some Humorous Things.

Not many years ago, one of the old-timers, still living, told me many funny things from our childhood days. She was often in the home and had a good memory. As a young girl of 15 or 16 years, she was an emergency help in the home during a visit by the Reverend Niels Ylvisaker and wife. This was in 1868. They stopped off on their way from Norway to Goodhue County, Minnesota, where he was to work. If I am not mistaken, father was instrumental in getting him to come to America; so naturally he stopped off for a visit. He preached in the churches -- the last service in the Fox River Church. His wife and my mother went with them. It must have been a cold day, as she said she prepared a big kettle of vegetable soup to give them upon their return in the evening. In the morning when she entered the kitchen, she saw what she thought was a great big animal lying on the floor. As it stirred and began



raising itself, she ran headlong in to call father and mother. They came as quickly as possible, quietly opening the door. There was no bear -- but a woman sitting on a chair and a buffalo robe at her side. She had been at the church to hear Reverend Ylvisaker preach; and upon returning home, she decided to give them a good quilt and walked the five miles to the parsonage to give it to them. When she arrived, the house was dark; so she went into the kitchen, found the buffalo robe and settled down for the night. Upon hearing some one coming in the morning, she moved under the robe and raised herself. "She certainly frightened me," said the lady.

When people wanted special services from the pastor, they had to come to the home. No telephones in those days. It was astonishing what patience a young man wanting to get married had, sometimes waiting for hours for father's return. I recall one such, saying quickly, "You have baptized me; you have confirmed me; now I want you to finish the job and marry me." He said it in the language mixture of the community, "Naa kan du finisha jobben."

A rather peculiar and sickish bachelor married a newcomer girl. The saying was that she married him for the home he had. He became very much disappointed as she began to take the reins in her own hands. So he came to see father. He was not at home; so my brother Halbert visited with him, listening to his complaints. Then he said, "Your father said that he who gets a wife gets a good thing." ("Den som faar en hustru faar en god ting"), "but it wasn't so with me." ("Dæ va inche saa mæ meg.") After giving vent to his feelings to a sympathetic listener, he left feeling better.

Once five couples happened to select the same day and hour for a church wedding. I can remember seeing the five couples coming down the aisle and taking their places before the altar. There were no bridesmaids. I cannot recall a single divorce case from that time.

Close-ups of Father and Mother

In his book about father, Reverend Björn writes, "If ever two people thought much of each other and faithfully shared their joys and their sorrows through life, it was these two."

For over 43 years they lived and worked in the same place and with the same people.

The call extended to father in 1853 was unique. It had the signatures of every family in the newly organized congregation. Not only the names of the men but of their wives also. To illustrate, I will give a few of the names as they were given:

Øryur og Jär Markhus
Sjur og Ragna Mathre
John og Gjörri Sjursem
Thor og Anna Bauge
Johannes og Ingeborg Moen
Torkel og Guri Henrysen
Gotskalk og Valjer Grønstad
Vier og Synneva Vigen
Elias og Guro Teigland -- and so on down the line.

There were many devout and sincere Christians, and a bond of friendship, love and understanding developed between them and my parents, that lasted through a lifetime. It was "a fellowship of kindred minds." Many of these passed on, and others moved away during father's pastorate. Only a small number of the early settlers were living when father left.

The congregation grew by leaps and bounds. Father was known to be one of the outstanding preachers of his day. He preached the law and the gospel -- sin and grace. Both are needed. I recall that one man was convicted of sin and brought to Christ by the word of John the Baptist: "And now the Ax is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." Another by the pleading, loving words of Christ: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The seed -- the word of God -- was sown; but the parable of Christ about the sower and the different soils is true at all times. Thank God, much of it fell into good ground and bore abundant fruit. There will always be tares among the wheat -- to be won for God.

Father's study was looked upon by us as a sanctum. We were taught not to enter without first knocking at the door. There was a private entrance, and we never knew when we might intrude. People in spiritual distress ("Sjælenød") would come for help and guidance by their pastor. And this they got. It was often prolonged stays with heart-to-heart talks and prayers. As one woman said to me, "We left strengthened and comforted." There seemed to be more of a decided difference between Christians and non-Christians than we see in our day.

Father had a large library and made good use of it. He also had a goodly supply of theological magazines and church papers. As he was gone much of the time during the day, he would sit with his books until the wee hours of the morning. When it got to be one or two o'clock, mother would often remind him of the time; but, she said, not if he was on his knees in prayer. Then she did not disturb him.

Father was very conscientious as to his responsibility as a pastor and soul-winner. A few such instances come to my mind. Word came that a member had suddenly died in an accident. I can see father sitting in his chair with his hands folded in prayer, then saying, "Have I been faithful to my calling? Have I done for him what I should as his pastor?" That was father.

Once as we were riding along, he saw a man working in the field near the roadside. He stopped and said, "You hold the horses and wait

for me. I must talk to this man." He did. It took some time before he returned. The man was so taken up with the affairs of this world that he had little time for the one thing needful, and this was an opportunity to see him alone -- and he made use of it.

One of his parishioners was taken sick, with no hope for his recovery. It meant a long, lingering illness. Father made frequent visits to his bedside. The man's spiritual condition worried father. He feared that he rested upon his being a good church-member and that he had led a good life -- for his salvation. I know that father took it to the Lord in prayer. On one of his visits, as he sat by his bedside, he said in his kindly way, "I am disturbed about your spiritual condition. I fear that you rest upon what you have done and not upon what Christ has done." The man listened quietly and then looked father in the face and said, "This you should have told me before." Father keenly felt the rebuke, but now the ice was broken and there was love and understanding. He died resting in the finished work of Christ.

It was a rare privilege to accompany father on his sick-calls. There was a smile of welcome on the face of the sick as he neared the bedside with a cheerful greeting to sit with them, for heart-to-heart talks, worship and prayer. He had a wonderful way of winning their confidence and understanding their spiritual condition. In a kindly way he would then reprove, help, strengthen and comfort as needed. He "loved to tell the story, of Jesus and His love." He spoke of death to a child of God as just stepping across the threshold into heaven. In our day even Christians shy away from talking about death to the sick, though they see it nearing. That is tabooed. Why should it be so? Father's aim was to lead them to Christ, so they could say: "If we live, we live unto the Lord; if we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live or die we are the Lord's." One farewell scene: ("Lykkelig hjemreise"). Answer ("Velkommen efter").

Father was a zealous worker for foreign missions. He has been called the father of foreign missions in our church, and, as Dr. Norlie says, its first great spokesman. As early as 1857, while the congregation still was in the pioneer era, contributions were sent to the Hermansburg mission in Africa, through Reverend Ludvig Harms. Letters from him to father are still on record. When later the church of Norway got its own mission field in Madagascar, the money was sent there, until our own church established its own field in southern Madagascar in 1893.

In 1873 father and Dr. F. A. Schmidt were sent as delegates from the Norwegian Synod, of which they were members, to the Norwegian Mission Society's convention in Drammen, Norway, whose mission it supported. We had no missionfield in China at this time.

His work for foreign missions was not limited to his own home congregations, but extended throughout the church wherever opportunities were given. Ladies' Aids or "Kvindeforeninger" were organized in the early 80's. If I mistake not, there were 7 or 8. They were not large. They met in the homes for a full day's work, sewing, knitting and quilting. I remember especially the fine piece quilts,

the gingham aprons with elaborate cross-stitch borders and pieces of fancywork. There were no cash dues, but material for work was generously donated. They worked for missions only. Through the reading of mission papers, they were kept in touch with the work and the workers on the field. It was astonishing how well informed many of them were.

In the fall of the year large mission festivals were held out in the open. It was an all day affair; so the people brought their lunch for a picnic dinner. In the morning there was a fine mission program, with an offering. In the afternoon there was a sale of the year's work of the societies. At times big prices were paid -- far more than their real worth -- but they said, "What of it; the money goes to missions." They were mission-minded and mission interested.

From 1878 to 1890 the Lisbon congregation contributed \$12,000 to foreign and Jewish missions. However, this did not detract from the work for home missions. There were yearly mission services in the churches, with larger personal donations placed on the altar.

We had a number of visits from Norwegian missionaries from Madagascar -- Dr. and Mrs. Borchgrevink being the first. That was in 1883. Some years later Missionaries Walea and Jørgensen came. They made our home their headquarters, where plans were made for their travels throughout the church. I remember that to me -- then a young girl -- was given the task of making a map or chart for the travels of the Borchgrevinks. When finished it looked like a tree having many branches large and small. Dots had the names of the places and the pastors where they were to go. They became fruit-bearing branches. What stands out in my mind is that in a letter to father from them after their return to Madagascar, they said that the chart adorned the wall in their home as a pleasant reminder of their tour in America and the many friends they had made.

Mrs. Borchgrevink saw the great need of a school for native girls as well as for the young men, but funds were not available. Her plan was to solicit pledges from individuals and societies to pay for a girls' stay at the school until after the confirmation age. It would cost 27 dollars a year. Nine girls were adopted by individuals and societies in our congregation. The school was called "Fru Borchgrevinks Asyl." This school proved to be a most wonderful asset to the mission work in Madagascar in the establishing of Christian homes.

Other distinguished men from Norway were also guests in our home for shorter or longer periods. Among these were the pastors J. Storjohan, J. Storm Munch, and A. Mortensen. Others from the home church were too numerous to mention. May I add that the pastors Peder Dreyer and Olaf Guldseth came to our home directly from Norway in the late 80's, and they were both ordained by my father and have paid fine tributes to my parents and our home. I greatly enjoyed and appreciated the hospitality of Reverend and Mrs. Dreyer when I visited Bergen on my Norway tour in 1925.

A pioneer parsonage was more or less like a hotel or hostelry. At least, our parsonage was. It was known for its hospitality. Here mother was the homemaker. This was not an easy task, as father was

often gone for weeks and months at a time. We were a large family; and when father had student help during summer vacations and visiting pastors preaching in his absence, they usually stayed with us. It was a great responsibility to shoulder the sole care of such a large household. She was always calm and unruffled. I cannot remember her ever losing her temper. She had that under control. She was firm but kind. Where others saw faults and shortcomings, she saw their good qualities. We were early taught to give up our own comforts when necessary, to sleep on hastily made beds on the floor and to wait for a second or third table-setting for our dinner.

On the Sundays when services were held in the large main church, the house was usually filled with dinner guests. Services often lasted from 11 till 2 o'clock, and people came from long distances, often over muddy or rough roads; so a warm meal was appreciated. Then on the Sundays when we attended services in the other churches, we were invited to the different homes for fine dinners. This was always enjoyed by us as children. The pioneer women were, as a rule, very good cooks. There was no scarcity when it came to food. I remember the large weddings and the tables laden with all kinds of good food. It took days of preparation. Perhaps they overdid. But these festive occasions were greatly enjoyed and long remembered. Now it seems as if they have gone to the other extreme at weddings as far as eats are concerned.

When the weather was cold, it was difficult to heat the big church for weddings; so they often came to the parsonage. Not the bridal couple only with a couple of witnesses, but all relatives and friends came too, at times. Chairs were brought from every room of the house to accommodate them. Usually the bridal pair with their attendants were given a room to prepare for the event. Presently they entered the room -- the bride arrayed with the usual bridal wreath and veil -- taking their places in readiness for them before an improvised kneeling bench placed before the table where father was awaiting them.

Deacons and elders held their meetings in the parsonage. Being an all day affair, dinner was always served. There were no church basements.

The biggest ordeal mother ever had in feeding people must have been when the Norwegian Synod had its meeting there in 1870. Preparations had been made for housing and feeding as many as possible in the home, -- but father wanted to entertain all the visiting pastors for dinner one evening after the sessions closed. Mother knew this; but amidst all his work, father forgot to tell her just when. So they came rather unexpectedly -- about 50 in all. With good help and a goodly supply of food on hand, mother met the emergency with her usual calmness. They were well taken care of. One of the older pastors said, "That's more than I had dared do to my wife." I guess father thought that he had told her.

Mother had a large cup in which she kept her money or change. It was like a cruse that was never empty. Father had two offerings a year, one at Christmas and one at Easter. All the dimes, nickels

and pennies were given to mother; that was her share. This cup caused much merriment. When in need, we would often say, "Well, as a last resort, we have mother's cup." And how often she helped out! And how often she had a coin for a child!

Both father and mother were very generous. Books were given both to children and adults. Many were handed the little book, "Look to Jesus" (Se paa Jesus") by mother. After mother's passing, a man said to me, "I'll never forget your mother. When we came from Norway, we were poor. She was generous in her giving. Once when I came to the parsonage, she went to the cellar, bringing a large jar of butter, divided into halves, and gave the one to me saying ("Nu har jeg delt broderligt") "Now I have divided it in a brotherly way." Another instance, just one among many: A man--a prodigal and wreck--from a prominent family in Norway, found his way to our home. Father helped him. He took him to town and rigged him out with new clothing. He was with us for some time and became a changed man.

Father joined the Norwegian Synod in 1863, but his congregations did not. When Luther College was built in Decorah, Iowa, he gave \$300 to the building fund. That was a big sum in those days, but he was always interested in church schools and Christian education. Positions of trust were given him. In 1871 he was made a member of the Synod's Church Council ("Kirkeraad"), a position he held for many years. In 1873 he and Dr. F. A. Schmidt were sent as delegates to the Norwegian Mission Society's convention in Drammen, Norway, as before mentioned. In 1876 he was elected president of the Synod's Eastern District, but resigned, mainly because of his health. The vice-president Reverend Frick became the president. Father's health was in poor condition for some years in the 1870's. Upon regaining his health, he was again elected as president of the Eastern District in 1883. Again he did not accept. The congregations opposed his shouldering the extra work that holding such an office would require. For 24 years -- through the prime of his life -- he was a faithful member of the Synod. A controversy between two factions ended in a split in 1887. Together with many others, father severed his connection with the Synod at this time. Together with other church groups the United Lutheran Church was organized in 1890. (The Conference, the Augustana Synod, and the Anti-Missourians.) Father was a zealous worker for this union. A fund of \$50,000 had to be gathered by the church group to which he belonged before the union's consummation. Father was in 1889 elected chairman of a committee to raise this money. This work required much traveling in order to present the cause to the congregations -- besides a large correspondence. It is true, as has been written, that he sent lengthy personal explanatory letters to all the pastors. He did not believe in short dictatorial notes. I was his helper and secretary at the time. He dictated the letters, and I wrote them all in longhand for him to sign. To write with an ordinary pen, continuously dipping it into the ink, was not the easy job of today with typewriters and good fountain pens. I must tell a little story in connection with this. A wealthy man living near our home was approached. He was not a member of the church, but attended services now and then. Father asked him to give 100 dollars. "You have the means. Use your money for a good cause. You can do it." The man smiled and said, "Yes, if you can furnish me

the will to do it." ("Ja, hvis du kan skaffe mig vilje"). He said that father would never be able to raise the \$50,000. Father said he expected to and added, "Will you give the last 50 dollars?" "Yes, I will," he said. And he did. The money was raised.

In 1890 the newly organized United Church elected him as chairman of the Mission Committee. This position he held for five years, resigning in 1895 because of failing health. This meant extra work in travels and correspondence. It was gratuitous work for the Lord. His heart was in the work, and it was with regret that he had to give it up.

In 1892 he and Rev. L. Lund were sent to Norway to attend a convention of the Norwegian Mission Society in Stavanger, this time mainly to arrange for a mission field of our own in Madagascar. This was successful, so that in 1893 we had southern Madagascar as our own mission field. Heretofore we had been sort of an auxiliary to the Norwegian Mission Society. God has richly blessed our mission work. Miraculous changes have taken place, changes the pioneer workers did not live to see. They laid the ground work upon which the church was built.

Father made four trips to Norway. Three have been mentioned. The fourth was made in 1876 for his health. More about that later. It was seriously considered that mother should accompany him on one of his trips. It was in 1873. However, when the final decision was to be made, she found that her home duties came first. There were eight children at the time needing a loving mother's care. Halbert was then the baby less than a year old. Even good care by others is not like that of a good mother.

Father and mother were both medium tall. Father was dark, with an abundance of black hair. Mother was a blonde with fair skin and medium light hair. In some ways they were opposites -- each supplementing the other. Mother was calm; father was more emotional. Their earnestness and piety were mingled with cheerfulness. Both had a sense of humor, father's a trifle more pronounced. I wish I had a letter he wrote to his son-in-law Reverend Huus, while mother was visiting them in Muskego, Wisconsin. It was not an ordinary letter. It had the heading "Lost, strayed or stolen", followed by a wonderfully unique description of mother, ending with the promise of a reward for her safe return. It caused a great deal of amusement. Mother very seldom left the home. It was only an occasional visit to her children. But father did miss her when she was gone. He felt lost. God was good in letting her live to care for him to the last.

Father was seriously ill a number of times. The hardships endured took their toll. In the earlier days he was taken severely ill in Iowa. Here he was cared for by friends. In 1880 he became sick in Chicago. For five weeks he received the best of care in the home of his friend Jens Olsen Kaasa. In 1876 he took a trip to Norway for his health. The ocean voyage was good, but while in Oslo he became seriously sick. He recovered, but was no better upon his return. For several years he was poorly, but again his strength was renewed like the eagle's, and he took up his work with his usual zeal and vigor in the church and home congregations. God still had work for him to do.

In the winter of 1884 mother was bedridden with a severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism. It was very painful, and she suffered greatly. On her birthday, March 28, as she was convalescing, father wrote her a poem voicing his gratitude to God for her recovery and to her for her Christian faith and patience through intense suffering, for her love and faithful companionship, asking God to enfold her in His loving care in the days to come. It was mother's 53d birthday. Once she had pneumonia; just when I do not know. I was away at school the year she had the inflammatory rheumatism.

The Family Decreases.

For thirty years the family remained unbroken, -- father, mother, and the nine children. Then came sickness and death. In a short period of only 2-1/2 years, three of the family circle were taken home to be with God. In 1885 Olaus, at the age of 25 years, died from typhoid fever, contracted during an epidemic at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, just before he was to be graduated from the Seminary. He came home before he was bedridden. On May 5, 1885, he died. In 1887 Lena Marie, the youngest of the three sisters, left us. She had just come home from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she had studied music -- so happy to be at home again -- when she was suddenly stricken with a lung trouble that ended her earthly career. She was only 17 years old. In October that same year Randolph, our youngest brother, eleven years old, became ill while on a visit with his sister Mrs. A. L. Huus, in Muskego, Wisconsin. It was what now is called appendicitis -- at that time inflammation of the bowels. After a few weeks illness, God took him home. Hospital care was unheard of. In each case the best of medical care and home nursing was given. Separate "In Memoriams" may be added. Our dear Heavenly Father had begun the ingathering into the mansions above, our ultimate goal. Our loss was their gain. But the loss was keenly felt, and our eyes were often dimmed with tears. However, as Christians we did not sorrow as those without hope. They had just gone before, and we looked forward to again meeting them in an unbroken family re-union in the heavenly home. We knew they would say, "When you think of us, think not of the tomb where you laid us down in sorrow; But look aloft and beyond earth's gloom, And wait for the great tomorrow." The home circle will be filled again.

Marriages.

During these years the three older ones, Gerhard, William and Mattie, were married and left the old home to establish homes of their own. On April 11th, 1883, Gerhard was married to Fanny Lehman of Columbus, Ohio. William was married to Inger Peterson of Lisbon, Ill., December 22, 1885; and Mattie married Reverend Alfred Huus on January 5, 1886. He was also a Lisbonite and a member of the home congregation. Ten years later Henry was married to Lucy Gray of Preston, Minnesota, on February 11, 1895. A few years later, November 7, 1898, Halbert was married to Bertha Sampson, also a member of the home congregation. Gerhard was married by a friend and classmate Rev. L. Schuh; William and Mattie by father, Henry by Gerhard, and Halbert by Henry.

Birthdays.

Birthdays were always remembered. They were always more or less festive days with small gifts. They were enjoyed and long remembered. We still have a remnant of a set of fine small dishes given me on my 9th birthday.

Father's 60th birthday was an outstanding and memorable one. That was in mid-winter, January 9, 1889. Gerhard and family and Mattie and her husband were coming home from Wisconsin for the occasion, but it was to be a surprise. They were to be met in Morris, 12 miles away. The day came. It was bitterly cold and very stormy, more or less of a blizzard. Uncle Holland was to meet them, and Halbert was to go with him. Father thought it was foolhardy and ridiculous for anyone to make the trip in such stormy weather; it was a lack of common sense. But Uncle Holland said he just had to go. He told father not to worry; they would be careful. He took a long sled, consisting of a wagon box on runners, with hay in the bottom for warmth, and a good supply of robes. In the home we were busy preparing a big turkey dinner -- and this was done in the summer kitchen -- otherwise not in use during the winter -- so as not to attract undue attention. We were all worried. Time and time again, father would go to the window taking a look at the weather, hoping and praying for their safe return. At last, as the darkness of the evening approached, we heard them coming. Father was at the door. They drove close to the kitchen door because of the deep snow and Fanny had left her overshoes on the train. Imagine father's surprise upon seeing one after another crawl out of the wagon box. He was speechless! It had been a hazardous trip, and they were all glad to get into a warm house, remove their snowy wraps, and gather around the bright glow of the heater to visit. They were cold. In the meanwhile we were busy getting the table set for the dinner already in readiness. It was in the living room for this festive occasion. Soon all were seated at the table to partake of the fine birthday dinner. The outside storm was forgotten. Inside there was warmth and comfort--with hearts filled with joy and happiness. That there was thanksgiving and praise is needless to say. Sixty years was considered quite an old age, and a milestone to be commemorated. Father was given a fine gold-headed cane, and mother was not forgotten. Gerhard was the spokesman for the family and presented the gifts. Such was father's 60th birthday, a never-to-be-forgotten day.

"All is well that ends well."

Two Memorable Palm Sundays.

On Palm Sunday 1854 father was ordained to the ministry by Dr. Sihler, in Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

On Palm Sunday 1894 -- 40 years later -- apparently in good health, he had a slight stroke that marked the beginning of the end of his long ministry. Services with communion were held in the large main church. Palm Sunday with its wonderful gospel message and its Hosannas has always been a festive day in the church. It happened while he was in the pulpit preaching. Fully realizing what it was, he

quietly ended the sermon. His speech was somewhat affected, his right arm also, but it was not paralyzed. As usual, a hymn was sung. With difficulty he administered the communion and ended the services. It was all done so quietly that it caused no disturbance. Not until afterwards were they fully aware of what had happened. That he realized its seriousness was revealed by a message to the family written the following day and placed in his wallet. It was found after his death, some years later. He had written, "I do not know what this sickness may lead to. Should it lead to the end, I wish to express a few wishes." And to the family: "God be with you all! My heartfelt thanks to my wife for her goodness. She has been a good wife and a tender mother. God bless her! And to you, my dear children, all: Be faithful to Jesus. Serve Him, honor Him, surrender fully to Him and live for Him." He was 65 years old, not an old age. The end did not come at this time.

The 40th Anniversary

Only two weeks later -- April 1, 1894 -- it was 40 years since he began his work as a pastor in the congregations near Lisbon, Illinois. There was to be an anniversary festival commemorating this event. Father's illness and an unexpected death in the family, cast a heavy, dark shadow over the festivities. During an epidemic of what was then called influenza, my sister Mattie, Mrs. A. L. Huus in Decorah, Iowa, was taken sick. This developed into pneumonia, with no hopes of recovery. I was sent for and was with her. Henry was also there. On the morning of the festival she died, and this message reached home shortly before their going to church. This, together with father's illness, put a damper on the festivities. There was deep sadness and heartfelt sympathy. The Mission Committee had its meeting in the parsonage, and president Hoyme, in his powerful and understanding way, preached. Neighboring pastors were present. Father, though not well, was present. Many tributes were paid him, with praise and gratitude to God for his long and faithful service in the Lord's vineyard, not only in his home congregations but throughout the church; not only on the home front, but his love and work for foreign missions. At the close of the service father, still very weak, stepped forward to express his thanks. Leaning on one of the big pillars, with tears falling freely, he wanted to share the tributes and honors that were conferred upon him with his faithful wife. "Whatever I have been permitted to do, I owe, next to God, to her who so lovingly, understandingly, and devotedly has stood by me through all these years, in joy and in sorrow, as well as prosperity and adversity." ("I medgang og modgang.") He wished to remember her at this time and express his own personal appreciation to her for what she had meant to him. A neighboring pastor said that this trait of father's, wanting to share his honors with mother, was to many the most beautiful and touching part of the service.

A few days later the big church was again filled to its capacity for the funeral of the beloved daughter and sister, Mrs. A. L. Huus. Again president Hoyme preached. It was a most comforting sermon, based on John 14, verses 1-2-3. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."

Father's Last Years

The congregations in Lanesboro, Minnesota, kindly granted my brother Henry a three months leave of absence so that he might serve father's congregations while he recuperated after his last illness. It was not easy for a young man in his twenties to step into father's shoes, nor was it easy for him to preach with father as a constant listener. But he was kind and considerate. Constructive criticisms were helpful and appreciated. It was a schooling that gave him an insight into and understanding of a mature and experienced pastor.

Upon Henry's return to his own congregations, father again -- with occasional outside help -- took up his work, but gradually his eyesight began failing. Specialists in Milwaukee and St. Paul were consulted, but nothing could be done. He could see to get around, but not to read. We had to read to him. This privilege was mostly mine. He would get the books and periodicals and decide on what should be read. The Norwegian and Swedish readings were easy; but when it came to German, it was not, as I had had only a year's study in German. However, I waded through sermons and articles, the latter from the "Lehre und Wehre" and the "Lutherische Zeitung", as best I could. How well I remember the twinkle in his eye and the smile on his lips whenever I made a mistake. "Now, what?" I would say, and we would stop for correction. Really, we both enjoyed it.

Father had "Bright's Disease". This caused his failing eyesight. So the doctors said. Realizing that his earthly tabernacle was fast crumbling and that his life's work was ended, he resigned early in 1897. The resignation was to take effect January 1, 1898.

In the fall of 1897 we left the parsonage that had been our home for so many years. Knowing that father had but a short time to live, the moving was doubly hard. To have stayed on in the home where every nook and corner was familiar, enabling him to find his way about, until his move to the heavenly home, would have been his wish, I know. But that was not to be. The home was not our own. It was a parsonage. But through it all, he was patient and uncomplaining.

Before leaving, a large farewell gathering was held on the parsonage lawn. There were about 600 present, nearly all adults. He was told about their coming. A surprise might have been harmful. Although sad, it was a very pleasant and long remembered farewell festival.

A home was being built next to Henry's home in Lanesboro, Minnesota; but until this was ready, we lived in Ottawa, Illinois, for about 8 months. How well I recall the day when he left the old home, never to see it again. His last look as we drove through the gateway betokened sadness. Words were not needed.

In May 1898 we moved to Lanesboro. Henry came to be of help. Every comfort was provided father for the journey, with a compartment where he could rest. Mother was his faithful nurse, then as always, and all went well. He did not live long to enjoy the new home, a little less than three months. He was not bedridden until the last ten days.

While in Ottawa we had much company. Many of his old parishioners came to see him, also neighboring pastors. Among these I must mention two of his old friends that came from some distance. They were Dr. F. A. Schmidt and Prof. Th. Bothne. He never tired of having us read to him. This mother and I did. The Bible, devotional books and hymns he loved. Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress was a book he wanted to read. Besides these there were the church papers and the news from the dailies. Music and singing was also enjoyed. Mother was his constant companion and faithful nurse to the end.

On August 5, 1898, while seated at the dinner table, he had a stroke and was put to bed. The children were called and were all at his bedside. His mind was clear, but he could not talk. For ten days he was tenderly cared for. Towards the end he beckoned for us to come nearer. We came one by one. He placed his hand upon the head and held it there for a time, then gently let it down in a loving stroke on the cheek. This was his farewell blessing. An unforgettable moment. Later, after a severe death struggle, Gerhard bent close and said: ("Kristi Blod og Retfærdighed er alt hvad jeg vil smykkes med.") "My hope is built on nothing less -- Than Jesus' blood and righteousness." He smiled, and his soul winged its way to be with the Lord. This was August 15, 1898. On the 17th funeral services were held in Lanesboro. Rev. N. Arvesen spoke at the house, and Rev. Jaastad and Rev. P. Dreyer in the church. Then came the journey back to Illinois, where services were held in the afternoon of the 18th. On the way from the station we were served lunch by friends in Newark, before going on to the church. We got there just before the hour set for the services. The Rev. Ellestad, a close friend, preached the funeral sermon. The pastors Lockren, J. O. Haugen, and N. G. Peterson also spoke. Then came the last trek from the church to the cemetery, where he was laid to rest beside the dear ones gone before. As to what father had meant to the community, I will let the "press" speak by giving excerpts from the town and county papers:

When this illustrious churchman was carried over and affectionately placed in the midst of a throng of silent settlers and dear ones who had gone before and forever closed his life and career in this world, then this community lost its most distinguished citizen. If Lisbon is a familiar household word in many homes in city, town, and country of this great land, it is because of the name of Rev. P. A. Rasmussen. He was a born churchman. He was one of its greatest builders, a tireless organizer and ceaseless finisher. That he was adored by his own countrymen and church people of all classes and of all nationalities was attested on the day that will go down in history as Lisbon's greatest funeral day. Business was suspended in the village through the funeral hours, and flags were at half mast both in Newark and Lisbon. His remains were brought from his late home, back to the spot he loved so well, and finally to the place selected for his eternal rest. (From the Lisbon "Comet")

As extended accounts of the Rev. P. A. Rasmussen's career have already been published in the Chicago papers, both in Norwegian and English, it will only be necessary here to tell of his funeral:

Long before the appointed hour, the church was filled. People began to pass through Lisbon as early as 10 A. M. It was the largest funeral ever held in this section. The interior of the church was tastefully draped, there was a profusion of floral emblems, and a large portrait of Pastor Rasmussen encircled in drapery was to be seen near the altar. There were about 20 ministers present At the close of the service the great congregation began to pass around and look for the last time on all that was mortal of one whom they had known and loved, and so large was the congregation that this took about 3/4 of an hour, though they marched in double file. Miss Carrie Scott was at the organ playing softly the strains of Grieg's funeral march. Five hundred and fifty carriages were counted at this funeral, and it was estimated that two to three thousand were in attendance. Pastor Rasmussen served one congregation for nearly 44 years. He was one of the most noted clergymen of the state, loved not only by his own country-men, but esteemed by good people of all nationalities. He was a man of more than ordinary prominence in this part of the country. (Kendall County Record)

The pallbearers were Severi Thompson (Haaland), Ole Tandal and Salve Ellertson from North Prairie, and Lars Likness, Arnt Sampson and Thor Hatteberg from Lisbon. The present pastor at the time, Rev. N. G. Peterson, was in charge. He read a fine poem written by Rev. O. Guldseth. Rev. J. O. Haugen spoke for the family. I give these excerpts from the local papers, for the grandchildren and great grandchildren to see what the secular press had to say about father.

That the church papers paid him fine tributes is needless to say. May I give a few short excerpts:

Dr. F. A. Schmidt: "His most important and most notable influence both among the pastors and the lay people was always connected with his clear insight and warm interest in the devotional and practical side of Christianity."

Prof. Th. Bothne: "Through his long service this venerable shepherd did much to build the Lutheran Church of America. He was a born speaker, and as a preacher he hardly had a superior among the Norwegians in America. There was a certain characteristic sweetness ("egen sødme") in his delivery. His gifts were many-sided, and for a long time he was a leader ("høvding") among the Norwegians in this country."

From two pastors that had come from Norway more recently and who had lived with us for a time, I quote their impressions.

Rev. Olaf Guldseth: "Those of us that came in closer contact with Rev. Rasmussen, will remember him as the quiet, tranquil, gentle personality who in all his bearing inspired confidence, esteem and good will. A spiritual man, a spiritual servant in all his work."

For him it was not a question of honor and reputation, but to magnify Christ. He must increase, and I must decrease."

Rev. Peder Dreyer: "The gospel of Christ was reflected in the smile of his countenance."

The congregation placed a beautiful monument on his grave. There was a festival connected with its unveiling. The family was invited. We were all there, mother, the four sons and myself. It was in the spring on Ascension Day. In the forenoon services were held in the church. Here Gerhard preached. His text was, "The New Jerusalem and the longings for the heavenly home." The large church was filled. In the afternoon a still larger congregation was assembled. The pastor gave the main address. Other neighboring pastors took part. Rev. N. G. Peterson's text was: "She goeth unto the grave to weep there." When you do, remember the cross points upward and speaks of God's love to sinners. As he spoke the closing words with thanks to God and in loving remembrance of father's long and faithful service in the Lisbon congregation, the beautiful memorial was unveiled. The main monument is 6 feet and the cross on top is 6 feet, making it 12 feet high, and can be seen for miles away. Gerhard spoke for the family. He said, "No more fitting marker could have been placed on father's grave than what they had put there -- the cross. May we all that are gathered here today to dedicate this cross as a memorial to our dear departed one, experience the power of the cross and its healing from all sin. On behalf of the family, I extend to the congregation and its pastor our heartfelt thanks."

A Rasmussen Memorial in Madagascar (Rasmussen's Minde)

Another memorial raised in his memory! A living memorial! It had its beginning in 1904. My aunt, Mrs. E. S. Holland -- an outstanding friend and worker for missions -- received a letter from Dr. M. J. Stolee, then a missionary in Madagascar, where he vividly depicted the sufferings and pitiable conditions among the old and poor of the Malagasy people. This letter was read at the Ladies' Aid, and the women were deeply touched. They decided to do something about it. Annual pledges were made, by individuals and societies, for an old people's Home in far-off Madagascar. The name "Rasmussens Minde" was suggested by Dr. Stolee. Already in 1906, nineteen old people had been housed. Here they received both bodily and spiritual care. Seven had been baptized, and the others were receiving instruction prior to baptism. For many years this work was carried on and was richly blessed by the Lord. Then changes came. The Christian natives were taught to care for the old people in their midst. So now in place of being a home for the needy aged, it is a much needed boarding school for young girls. With the exception of a few gifts from outside friends, it has been wholly supported by the Lisbon congregations. During these nearly 40 years, some 12,000 dollars have been given to this cause. It is still deeply rooted and loved by many of the parishioners, and, as far as I know, the Ladies' Aids continue their annual contributions.

The Language Question

Already in the 70's they saw the trend towards the need of the use of the English language, and discussions were held as to how this should be met. This ended in decisions that the change in church and schools would be made when the time was ripe for the change.

The last child baptized by father was Alta Larson Beard, now of Chicago.

The last confirmant he confirmed was a daughter of John Ingemonsen.

Mother's Last Years

From 1898 to 1912 -- a period of 14 years -- mother lived in her home in Lanesboro, Minnesota, together with her grandson Randolph Huus, who had been with us since his mother's death, then a baby only 7 months old, and me. Here she spent some quiet, restful years after a long busy life. Having her children near meant so much to her; Henry just next door, Gerhard in Harmony, William in Mabel, and Halbert in Winona. This made frequent visits to mother possible. Her birthdays were made much of. Whenever possible, the children came to celebrate. How much these were enjoyed can best be said in the words of one of her grandchildren: "I just wish that grandma's birthday would come twice a year." Her 80th birthday was a big day. From friends far and near she received about 200 greetings. Until her last illness, she was in fairly good health and attended church services regularly. She also made visits to her children. Her hospitality continued much as before. Her grandchildren enjoyed the contents of her cookie-jar. Often she would sit by the table or by the window with her knitting and her books. Besides the Bible and hymn book, two of her favorite books were "Skrivers Sjeleskat" and "Johan Arndts Sande Kristendom." She had a good voice and would often sing at her work. She was neat in her dress -- never untidy. With her usual dark dress there was always a white ruching or small white collar fastened with a brooch. Her hair was always smoothly combed. She saw many changes in dress, from the large hoop skirts of the 60's, the bustles of the 80's, the long trains dragging along or deftly lifted when necessary, etc. It took yards and yards of material for a dress. She did not live to see the many scantily clad women of our time. In a museum in Washington, D. C., there are wax figures of the presidents' wives, from Martha Washington to the present time, dressed in original costumes. There you see at a glance the evolution of dress, gorgeous but beautiful. During the Civil War everything was very expensive. Prices soared then as now. The ordinary plain calico was 50 cents a yard. Other goods accordingly. During this time mother paid 12 dollars for a bonnet. I often wished it had been saved for us to see. However, she did save the ribbon ties; it is beautiful.

Mother's Last Illness and Death

After New Year's 1912, her health gradually failed; and after a lingering illness, life ebbed away. She was lovingly cared for by Henry, Lucy, her brother Bjorn Holland, and me. We were always near. The others came as often as possible. It was a privilege to be at her bedside. The many portions of God's word and the many hymns she had committed to memory were on her lips early and late. She was a praying mother. One Sunday morning she seemed a little restless. Asked if there was anything she wanted, she said, "You know this is Sunday, and I have four sons that will preach today. I would like to be left alone for a while -- alone with my God." While they were about their work, her prayers followed them. Shortly before her death, William came to see her. He thought of sending word to his congregation that he would not be there that Sunday, as he wished to be with mother. But she said to him, "You go. I will feel better if you do. Do not neglect your work because of me." That was mother. So he went.

An unusual honor was given her while she was on her sick bed. The convention of the United Church sent her a greeting. It is not often that a woman is thus honored. A translation of the letter follows. Also one from Reverend Hoyme, president of the Church:

"Dear Mrs. Rasmussen!

The United Church's Convention in Fargo, North Dakota, has with sorrow heard of your sickness and has asked me to send you its greeting and express its sympathy with you in your illness. It is our prayer that the Heavenly Father, who accepted you as His child in your infancy and has through your long life given you so many experiences of His great love, grace and faithfulness, will greatly strengthen and uphold you in the faith of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption with the forgiveness of sin. We feel confident that the dear Savior, who has promised to be with his own alway -- also in the trying and painful days of sickness -- yes, even on the day when they shall walk through the valley of the shadow of death, will let you experience that He is with you with His grace and comfort.

Should it be His will now to take you home to be with Him, we do not begrudge you the joy and rest that remains for the children of God. We would bid you a hearty farewell, with thanks for everything during our sojourn here below. Should it please Him to raise you up from the sick bed, we would thank Him for it. He doeth all things well. His name be praised.

On behalf of the United Luth. Church,

Yours in Christ,
J. N. Kildahl, Sec."

"Dear Mrs. Rasmussen!

It was a pleasant surprise when upon my return home today I received your gift to our building fund. Accept my hearty thanks! It is encouraging to know that one who has had so long a workday in the Church as you have had still is not tired. Would that our youth -- the coming generation -- will stand as faithfully by the church in its work and distress, ~~in faith and prayer, as the older ones have; it has nothing~~ to fear. God be praised! We have encouraging examples of this.

With best wishes that God's blessing and comfort may be yours in a rich measure while in the evening of life you await His summons and the re-uniting in glory with him whom we together with you, so often miss so much.

With brotherly love and esteem,

Yours,
G. Hoyme."

On the 18th of June, 1912, she went home to be with the Lord. She fell asleep in Jesus as a tired child. Funeral services were held in Lanesboro on the 19th. Reverend N. Giere was the main speaker, but Reverend Jaastad and Prof. L. A. Vigness also spoke. Then came her last journey to Lisbon for burial, where funeral services were held June 21st. The local pastor, Rev. Shefveland, officiated in the house, the church, and at the cemetery. The neighboring pastors Th. Aarnstad and O. A. Mortvedt gave shorter talks in the church. The final remarks were made by her eldest son Gerhard. The Lisbon paper said that he delivered a beautiful eulogy on the beauty, loyalty, and fidelity of his loving and gentle mother, who was so worthy and deserving of all the praise any son could give to any mother, whose whole motherhood was so joyfully given to their childhood care, and careful guidance ever after. "The writer had no personal acquaintance with this saintly mother. We only know that when an entire community stands up to laud the grand qualities of the one they knew so well, we are safe in assisting their virtues." (End of quote.)

In the Chicago weekly "Skandinaven" of July 10th, the Reverend Aarrestad had a very fine article about mother, from which I will give a few excerpts. "In the passing of Mrs. P. A. Rasmussen, a splendid woman has left us. She was one of those brave and faithful pioneer women who was given the opportunity to take part in the important foundation work among our people. The strength of these women was not the brilliant showing on the public arena. It was more in the narrow home circle. Here they found their place, and here was where their strong influence was felt. Not only while they lived, but long after their departure. Mrs. Rasmussen was a Godly woman. She was modest and humble. One of the quiet in the land. She often feared that she was not fitted or qualified to fill her position as a pastor's wife. She underrated her ability. Without bragging may it be said that by the grace of God

she became a blessing to many. She left a beautiful memory in the Lisbon congregation. It is remarkable how unanimously they recognized and appreciated her activity among them. More testimony is not needed. They gave an expression of their love by giving her a yearly offering throughout her widowhood. This was a warm greeting and greatly appreciated."

Mother's funeral was a service of praise and thanksgiving. One of the older deacons, who had known her throughout her life, said afterward: "This has been a festive day to me. One of God's saints has reached home."

Blessed be her memory!

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Rev. 14-13.

When father resigned, the congregation decided to give him a pension of 500 dollars a year; but just 7-1/2 months after his resignation took effect, he died. After his death they decided to give mother an offering every year, as stated by Rev. Aarrestad. In the early days, mother received a small inheritance of 600 dollars. This money was to be kept for her, father said. Through their good friend T. T. Henryson, it was invested in a farm in Story County, Iowa. Land was cheap in those days. For many years there was no income; that had to be used for improvements. No matter how hard pressed for money, father never wanted it sold. It was the income from this farm that provided mother with means for a modest living through the 14 years of her widowhood.

Later Anniversaries

An anniversary was held during Pastor Harrisville's pastorate, in connection with a church meeting of several days. To this we were all invited. The two most distinguished guest speakers were Dr. H. G. Stub, then the president of our church, and Reverend Nordby, who was the president of the Eastern District. On the Sunday Gerhard preached and Henry was the liturgist. Henry had preached the previous day. Many of the congregation's pastor sons were present and took part in the discussions and preached, as services were held not only in the two churches of the congregation, but in neighboring churches as well. Both the Norwegian and the English language was used. Pastors H. Shurson, L. Thorsen, L. Marvick, T. Syvertsen, G. Peterson, Roy Harrisville -- all sons of the congregation -- preached. This meeting was held in the fall of 1922. A history of the congregation was written and read by William Larson.

Centennial Anniversary, 1929

This festival commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of father. It was a unique festival. Reverend T. J. Knutson was then the pastor. In writing about it, he says that it was an unusual

festival in the old Lisbon congregation. They wished to remember their first pastor and his long service among them. It was an ideal day, and the new church was filled to overflowing all day. The Rasmussen children were invited, and that they all, with the exception of Rev. William Rasmussen, were present was exceedingly gratifying. A grandson, Randolph Huus, and Mrs. Rasmussen's old brother Bjorn Holland were also present. It proved to be a real family festival. The festival sermon was delivered by Dr. M. J. Stolee. As a former missionary, he naturally dwelt on Rasmussen's love and interest for foreign mission work. In the afternoon Dr. H. O. Shurson gave an address on "Rasmussen as a minister and pastor." This -- as a son of the congregation -- he could do. When Gerhard Rasmussen stepped forward and spoke on what father and mother had meant to him and the other children, the audience was so deeply moved as is seldom seen. To close, he expressed his thanks to the congregation and its pastor for having arranged this festival in their father's memory and a "thank you" to the speakers Dr. Stolee and Dr. Shurson and others who had taken part in the services. Pastor Knutson then expressed his own and the congregation's thanks to the Rasmussen pastors and the speakers who had helped to make the festival such a great success.

The evening session was given first and foremost to the Rasmussen brothers, with singing and shorter talks by other visiting pastors." (Free translation of excerpts from Reverend Knutson's report.) As some one said: It was the end of a perfect day.

Eightieth Anniversary of the Lisbon Congregation
September 2-3-4, 1934

"In grateful remembrance of the early pastors and the pioneer men and women of the congregation."

Again we were invited to participate in the festivities. Henry and I were the only ones that could come. The Sunday festival sermon on Sunday morning was preached by Henry in the South Church. On Monday he preached in the North church. Tuesday afternoon I had the honor of giving a talk. Mostly reminiscences. All three days the churches were filled. Among the many participants were Pres. Green of the Eastern District, the pastors Gerhard Peterson and Roy Harrisville. The pastor Rev. N. Klungtvedt presided. It was a long-to-be-remembered festival. A booklet prepared for the occasion gives further detailed information. May I add that all the services but one were conducted in the English language. Two of the former pastors' wives, Mrs. Harrisville and Mrs. Knutson, gave fine greetings.

It may be of interest to know that at the cornerstone laying of the new church in 1926, Gerhard delivered the sermon and, if I mistake not, laid the cornerstone -- and that later when the church was dedicated, Henry preached the dedicatory sermon. An honor we as a family appreciated. Reverend T. J. Knutson was then the pastor.

May God continue to bless the Lisbon congregation!

We cherish the memories of our Christian home. We humbly bow our heads in gratitude to God for the many blessings that have followed us through life as a benediction, because of the teachings and prayers of our Christian parents, -- paying homage to their memory. Their life's history is written. Ours is in the making. Their work of yesterday is the history of today. Ours will be the history of tomorrow.

"Faith of our fathers -- living faith,
We will be true to thee -- till death."

And this means:

"On Christ, the solid rock, we stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

This ends my reminiscences of father and mother.

The Children

From the time of mother's death in 1912 up to 1943 -- a period of 31 years -- there was no death in the immediate family. The five children, Gerhard, William, Henry, Halbert and myself, have been given many years for service in the Lord's vineyard and the enjoyment of Christian comradeship -- for which we thank the Lord.

Gerhard served as pastor 44 years -- and 16 years of broadcasting vesper services every Sunday over W C A L, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. William served for 38 years. Retired because of being hard of hearing.

Henry has served for 54 years and is still working.

Halbert has served 45 years and is now the only one of the brothers still serving his congregation.

Henry, Jr., has served for 12 years, and Halbert, Jr., 10 years. The latter has been an army chaplain since 1940 and has now been sent abroad.

Adding father's 44 years, it may be of interest to see that at this writing in 1945, father, his sons and grandsons have given the Lutheran Church of this country 265 years of pastoral service.

And the work goes on.

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